

*Don Giovanni Alla Breve -*  
Retaining Authenticity in Lorenzo Da Ponte's Libretto?

by

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## *Abstract*

*Don Giovanni Alla Breve* forms part of a new venture into opera performance that eliminates all the *recitativi secchi* from the original work and replaces it with English, Afrikaans and Xhosa dialogue. Furthermore, only the musical highlights are used resulting in a drastically shortened, dramatized concert version of Mozart and Da Ponte's *Don Giovanni*. Although this concept has various obvious positive elements, I will be observing the production through the lens of authenticity in Western art music performance whilst engaging critically with current debates regarding this topic. Ultimately, the study aims to re-reduce *Don Giovanni* in an attempt to produce a *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* that aims to retain Da Ponte's original plot, whilst communicating the still current social issues that Mozart had wanted to address in this opera.

The argumentative flow of this thesis was born from a personal level of discomfort towards the manner in which *Don Giovanni* was reduced. As a participant observer in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, as fashioned by *Opera in Darling*, I set out to seek logical reasoning behind my discomfort. I started this study with an ethnographical chapter, attempting to relay a description of events as a participant observer in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. Through the course of this chapter I set out to seek the reasoning for my discomfort with the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* and the manner in which it was reduced. The thesis then goes into a comparative discussion on fifteen scenes from the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* and discusses how the libretti of these scenes compare to Da Ponte's original libretto. This was executed to highlight the extent to which Da Ponte's original *Don Giovanni* libretto had been altered in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto.

Questioning the acceptability of the alterations made to Da Ponte's original libretto leads to a critical discussion on the idea of authenticity in Western art music. My argument gains focus by discussing authenticity in opera, followed by a discussion on authenticity on opera libretti and concluding with a discussion on authenticity in *Don Giovanni*'s libretto as such. Not fully satisfied by the outcome of this discussion, I set out to anchor my argument towards an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* by looking elsewhere. The anthropologically related field of popular culture. The study concludes with my own re-reduction of *Don Giovanni* that aims to deliver a *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* that resides closer to the core of Da Ponte's original *Don Giovanni* libretto, whilst considering the preceding discussions on topics relating to authenticity in Western art music.

## *Opsomming*

*Don Giovanni Alla Breve* form deel van 'n nuwe onderneming in opera uitvoering wat weg doen met die *recitativi secchi* van die oorspronklike werk en dit vervang met Engels, Afrikaans en Xhosa dialoog. Verder word slegs die bekendste musikale nommers gebruik. Dit lei tot 'n drastiese verkorte, gedramatiseerde konsertweergawe van Mozart en Da Ponte se opera *Don Giovanni*. Alhoewel hierdie konsep verskeie voor die hand liggende, positiewe elemente bevat, gaan ek die produksie deur die lens van outentisiteit in Westerse kunsmusiek observeer, terwyl ek krities met die onlangste debatte oor die onderwerp omgaan. Uiteindelik beoog dié studie om *Don Giovanni* te herverkort in a poging om 'n *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* te skep wat meer gebonde is aan Da Ponte se libretto se oorspronklike storielyn, terwyl die steeds relefante sosiale kwessies gekommunikeer word aan die gehoor.

Die logiese vloei van argumente in die tesis was gebore vanuit 'n persoonlike ongemak teenoor die wyse waarop *Don Giovanni* verkort is deur *Opera in Darling*. As 'n deelnemende waarnemer in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, soos deur *Opera in Darling* in die lewe geroep, het ek die studie begin vir die daarstelling van 'n logiese argument agter my ongemak. Ek begin dié studie met 'n etnografiese hoofstuk as 'n deelnemende waarnemer in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, wat poog om 'n verduideliking van gebeurtenisse weer te gee. Deur die loop van die hoofstuk soek ek na 'n logiese redenasie vir my ongemak met die huidige *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* en die manier waarop dit verkort was. Daarna volg 'n vergelykende bespreking van vyftien tonele uit die huidige *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. Hier analyseer ek hoe dié tonele vergelyk met Da Ponte se oorspronklike *Don Giovanni* libretto. Hierdie vergelyking word uitgevoer om die graad waartoe Da Ponte se oorspronklike *Don Giovanni* libretto verander was na vore te bring. Die bevraagtekening van bogenoemde veranderinge lei tot 'n kritiese bespreking van die idee van outentisiteit van Westerse kunsmusiek. Die bespreking verkry fokus deur die bespreking van outentisiteit in opera, gevolg deur 'n bespreking van outentisiteit in opera libretti en ter afsluiting, 'n bespreking oor outentisiteit van die *Don Giovanni* libretto.

Nie ten volle tevrede met die uitkoms van die bespreking nie, fundeer ek vervolgens my argument vir 'n outentieke *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* in die antropologiese veld van populêre kultuur. Die studie word afgeluit met 'n kreatiewe hoofstuk waar ek my eie herverkorting weergee wat daarop fokus om nader aan die kern van Da Ponte se oorspronklike *Don*

*Giovanni* libretto te bly, terwyl die voorafgaande besprekings van oorspronklikheid in Westerse kunsmusiek, in gedagte gehou word.

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## ***Chapter 1: Introduction***

### **Background**

*Opera Alla Breve*, literally translated as *opera in the brief*, refers to a recent development in opera production where a drastically shortened and adapted version of an opera is performed. These reduced versions are characterised by the replacement of all the *recitativi secchi* (as discussed later in this thesis) with spoken dialogue translated into the vernacular of the specific region where the opera is to be performed. This allows the work to be immediately comprehensible to the given audience. Seeing that only the most popular main numbers from the original operas are used, the reduced versions are substantially shorter in comparison to the original works. Furthermore, the *Alla Breve* version is accompanied by piano or (budget permitting) chamber ensemble instead of a full orchestra, as the financial burden of a full symphonic orchestra is simply too large. As explained by Alfred Legner, owner of *Opera in Darling* and producer of the South African *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, the pressures of budget and the fact that sponsorship monies are being withdrawn from the opera art form, is forcing opera companies, festivals and event organizers to follow the *Alla Breve* format, because of its inexpensive production costs (Legner, 2015).

The first of such works was *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* performed by the Austrian company, *Musiktheater in Bewegung*, on instruction of Christoph Preiser. The reduction was executed by Alexander Kuchinka, director of the original *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* in Vienna. When asked, Kuchinka expressed that the main goal of the *Alla Breve* format was to reduce the work to its musical highlights, while employing the use of dialogue very sparingly, to create a scenic concert version of the original work. The driving force behind this was one of pure entrepreneurship (Kuchinka, 2015). Reducing the magnitude of staged opera in size and length, creates a division of the operatic art form that relates to investors and festival organisers within the arts, considering the substantially lower amount of initial capital needed for production. This ultimately brings opera to the more remote parts of South Africa, where this form of theatre might not always be easily accessible.

Kuchinka explained that he started by selecting the musical “highlights” from the original opera and based on this, decided which scenes were to be left out and which were to be performed. He quickly arrived at the idea of the character of Leporello (Don Giovanni’s right hand man) being used as a narrator. He furthermore explained that the dialogue used for the other characters organically grew from Leporello’s introductory narrative (Kuchinka, 2015).

*Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, as based on Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Lorenzo Da Ponte's *Don Giovanni*, tells the tale of the legends of Don Juan, a womanizer who will stop at nothing to ensure he can add names to his list of woman who fell for his charm. In this opera Don Giovanni meets his match when he tries to seduce and possibly rape Donna Anna. After Don Giovanni kills her father in a physical confrontation, the statue on her father's grave comes to life in the final scene, dragging Don Giovanni to hell to be punished for his misdeeds on earth.

The *Alla Breve* production as performed in Germany in 2010, was introduced to South African audiences in 2013, fashioned by *Opera in Darling* as part of the annual *Darling Music Experience*, under the leadership of Alfred Legner. The original German dialogue, as derived by Kuchinka, was translated by local musician, José Dias. This localised translation included dialogue in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa to ensure that a wider spectrum of local opera followers, would support the concept.

Although parallels exist between the *Alla Breve* form and operas performed in concert style (e.g. *Die Zauberflöte*<sup>1</sup> as performed by Willem Vogel (*Salon Music*) at the Brooklyn Theatre in Pretoria, South Africa, as well as many of the works performed by the *Black Tie Ensemble* under the guidance of Mimi Coertze and Neels Hansen), these concert style operas employ narrators to narrate the plot of the opera while the remaining characters merely sing. In contrast to this, *Opera Alla Breve* demands each character in the opera to continue delivering their own plot lines (as done in the original opera), but only in the form of dialogue and in the vernacular language to the given audience. The main difference resides in the “*scenic* concert version” concept as put forth by Kuchinka.

Kuchinka made it clear that one is not doing the genre of opera a favour by seeing it as a “holy”, traditional art form that can or may not be adapted. He argues that the fresh, publically-orientated concept of *Opera Alla Breve* can fix the genre's financial burdens and will allow opera to once again be seen as part of popular culture in contrast to its current state of “high” culture. It will further allow the art form to be introduced to a younger audience who are not familiar with live operatic performance (Kuchinka, 2015). These views are supported by Raimondo Van Staden, current staging director of the South African *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, who believes that this is a pleasant way of introducing opera to the “newcomer”. Van Staden further believes that although this format has the potential to reach

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<sup>1</sup> This production of *The Magic Flute* replaced the original German dialogue of this Mozart *Singspiel* with English and Afrikaans dialogue, but the plot stayed original and the opera was never shortened in any way.

audiences of all ages and demographical groups, it should not be seen as a replacement for opera performance in South Africa, as there exists a large following towards the traditional methods of opera performance (Van Staden, 2015).

In addition to Kuchinka and Van Staden's views on this opera format reaching the "new-comer" to opera performance, Lisa Engelbrecht, musical director and pianist for the South African *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, expressed that she thought this format indeed had an impact on the Western art music niche market, especially those of the small towns along the west-coast (Engelbrecht, 2015).

Another positive result that can be drawn from the *Alla Breve* form or more specifically *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, is the social relevance that this work potentially has for contemporary audiences, especially within a South African context. In an interview with Engelbrecht, she said that characters such as Don Giovanni exist in current day South Africa in abundance, as they have in all social groups in the past and present (Engelbrecht, 2015). Legner's opinion concurs on this matter. He argued that murder, rape and the abuse of women is not unknown to our culture as South Africans and that we are merely trying to convey these stories through a "tongue-in-the-cheek" [sic] manner, without diminishing the issues at hand (Legner, 2015). In contrast to what Legner argues above, I believe that the high degree of comedy in the *Alla Breve* format reduces and suppresses the gravity of such social issues and they are not exploited to their full level of seriousness in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. This is, for example, illustrated in the omission of the murder of the Commendatore in the opening scene of the opera. Van Staden too believes that although the comical elements allow the audiences to laugh at issues they fear, the seriousness of Don Giovanni's misdeeds are not brought to life (Van Staden, 2015). Kuchinka has yet another take on this issue and although he agrees that the above-mentioned misdeeds are an integral part of our contemporary culture, the question is not what is being portrayed, but rather how it is being portrayed (Kuchinka, 2015).

## **Problem Statement**

After participating in the localized *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* on an ad-hoc basis (where I performed the characters of Don Giovanni and Leporello respectively) it became apparent to me that there were shortcomings in the way in which this opera's plot was reduced – in my experience the plot and story line of *Da Ponte's* original libretto was lost; *Da Ponte's* semi-tragic (combining tragic and comic elements) *Don Giovanni* had now become a sitcom.

This has motivated me to undertake an analysis of my experience in order to explore the questions raised through this experience in the form of an ethnography, consider the legitimacy of operatic alterations through the discourse of authenticity in Western art music and to argue the necessity of a re-reduction of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* that aims to retain the semi-tragic (combining tragic and comic elements) thread of Da Ponte's original libretto and ultimately replace the existing construction as devised by Kuchinka.

I aim to investigate Da Ponte's libretto for *Don Giovanni* from different viewpoints. These include a discussion on the performance of opera through the lens of authenticity, an exploration of the reception of the *Alla Breve* version, a critical discussion of the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto and a creative response to an *Alla Breve* libretto grounded in the anthropologically related principles of popular culture.

## Chapter Overview

In this thesis it is important to note that the arguments that arose from the material dictated the order in which the chapters are presented.

Chapter two employs the use of ethnographical writing. This chapter attempts to track the development of the South African *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. It furthermore aims to shed light on the aspects of the various productions that caused my level of discomfort with the current state of the production.

In the third chapter, I build on the outcome of chapter two and illustrate the differences between the original *Don Giovanni* libretto and the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto. This allows me to know at which point the current reduction is at its weakest compared to the original libretto. This assists me in determining the necessity for a re-reduction of Mozart and Da Ponte's *Don Giovanni* to the *Alla Breve* format.

In chapter four I engage critically with the discourse of authenticity in Western art music. Starting from the etymology of the term, the chapter discusses authenticity in Western art music and opera. It then moves on to cover authenticity in opera libretti. Furthermore, I engage critically in the discourse surrounding popular culture as a subdivision of anthropology. I aim to pinpoint why it is that contemporary culture feels the necessity to use comedy as a method to confront social and political challenges that they might be facing.

Lastly, in chapter five, I attempt to re-reduce Mozart and Da Ponte's *Don Giovanni* to the *Alla Breve* form, aiming towards a reduction that rings true to Da Ponte's authentic *Don Giovanni* / *Don Juan* libretto.

## Methodology

### *Research design and instruments*

My research will be conducted as a qualitative study using the methods of interviewing, ethnography, literature study, an analysis of Da Ponte's libretto and to a lesser extent the music of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. The study plans to situate the *Alla Breve* format in an international context, described through an ethnography of my own experience. It aims to discuss the questions that were raised through this experience with specific reference to the authenticity debate and the discourse of popular culture. By analysing how the plot of the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* was reduced, I aim to determine the validity of devising a re-reduction that will endeavour to keep Da Ponte's original story line at heart.

### *Interviews*

A number of role players, within the industry of opera and authenticity in Western art music performance, have been interviewed and consulted throughout the course of this thesis. Alexander Kuchinka, the moving force behind the Viennese *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* reduction, completed a structured interview (in German via E-mail as Kuchinka currently resides in Austria and prefers to communicate in his home language). Alfred Legner, producer of the localized *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* and owner of *Opera in Darling*, was interviewed through the means of a structured interview via e-mail. Lisa Engelbrecht, the musical director of the South African *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, was interviewed through a structured interview via e-mail. Raimondo van Staden, staging director of the current local *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, completed a structured interview via e-mail. I completed an interview with Rebekka Sandmeier through personal communication as she is a practitioner of historical performance practice. She is furthermore well-researched in the field of Western art music authenticity and the discourse surrounding it. In conclusion an interview was conducted by means of personal communication with Erik Dippenaar, who is proficient in the field of authenticity in Western art music performance as his main field of study and performance.

### *Ethnography*

Originally a discipline of anthropological writing, ethnographies are the ultimate balance between creating, gathering, analysing and combining of materials (Kahn, 2011: 175). According to Seth Kahn in his essay *Putting Ethnographic Writing in Context* (2011) the largest challenge one faces when writing an ethnography is that one should collect information with no knowledge of the possible outcome or conclusion of the research – “inductive reasoning” as he calls it (Kahn, 2011: 178). These views concurred with those expressed by Karen O’Reilly in her book *Key Concepts in Ethnography* (2009). She further notes that one should be cautious to collect rich data on the subject objectively rather than subjectively (O’Reilly, 2009).

Ethnographies have various points of interest that legitimizes its use as a research tool. Firstly, they have the ability to improve one’s understanding of a subject as well as the individuals that populate the given subject (Kahn, 2011: 176). Secondly, this writing technique provides a method allowing one to look further than the surface of the topic and to question the status quo (O’Reilly, 2009). Thirdly, ethnographies allow us as *participant observers* to take a stance as an outsider (observer) as well as a participant in the project being investigated (Kahn, 2011: 176). Finally, and the most applicable to my study - ethnographies allow us the insight to comprehend the level of knowledge we have on our field of study through the realization of questions that organically arise from the research (Kahn, 2011: 175).

When I started this study, I was unable to identify exactly why I was feeling uncomfortable with the difference between Da Ponte’s *Don Giovanni* libretto and the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto (as explained in the introduction to this study). It is for exactly this reason that I engaged in ethnographical writing in chapter two of this thesis. Based on the fourth reason listed above, it was my aim to write this chapter with the goal of concluding with questions and exact points of discomfort that will function as a starting point to the thesis as a whole.

### **Limitations**

Through the course of the thesis, one should expect to focus on *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* as an additional form to the operatic performance industry and should not be compared to the likes of concert version opera performance. The *Alla Breve* form is a reduction of operatic

performance and should not be seen as operatic performance dispensing with theatrical drama altogether.

The reader should not expect a lengthy discussion on topics surrounding the *Alla Breve* format such as financial sustainability, diminished amounts of props or the lack of stage sets, lighting and sound, but rather an in-depth discussion on the manner in which *Don Giovanni* was reduced and to what extent it alters Da Ponte's original libretto. Why was the plot altered and what impact does this have on the social applicability of *Don Giovanni* within the realm of our popular culture?

In this study the main limitation resides within the foreign language of *Don Giovanni's* libretto. Because this study is grounded within the analysis of the libretto that was written in a language that I do not speak fluently (Italian), I need to rely on pre-existing translations of the libretto, which narrows the alternative possibilities in translational interpretations.

Through the course of this thesis it will become apparent that the current method of operatic reduction to the *Alla Breve* form is solely based upon the reduction of operas born from the classical period (1700's – 1800's). This limits my research to this period of musical performance only. Whether this information is applicable to Western art music from any other point in history is not yet known and could be a fruitful avenue for further study at PhD level.

## **Ethics**

I herewith understand that the research within this thesis includes interviews with key role players and organizations that require permission from themselves and the University of Stellenbosch to be presented in this thesis. To my knowledge I have complied with the guidelines as presented by the *Departmental Ethics Screening Committee* (DESC) based on the *Singapore Statement on Research Integrity*.



## ***Chapter 2: Opera in Darling's Don Giovanni Alla Breve – an Ethnography***

This ethnographical chapter of my thesis discusses my journey as a participant observer in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* that started during my studies towards my BMus degree at the South African College of Music Opera School at UCT in Cape Town (2011-2014) as an operatic baritone. There I had the occasion to take part in several staged productions of Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, these productions were not only abbreviated, but were also subjected to a number of drastic alterations to Da Ponte's original libretto. Throughout the preparation stage as well as the fifteen performances that took place, (and despite the venture being described as a 'great success') (Muller, 2013) I could never escape a feeling of being most uncomfortable with the modifications that had been made to Da Ponte's original libretto.

The main part of what attracted me to study within the field of operatic performance is twofold (besides the fact that opera performance is my field of specialization). Firstly, it is my personal belief that opera has the potential to teach our society ethical values. It has the prospectus to teach our youth what is truly happening in the world without having to make them aware of these situations in real life scenarios. Secondly, but surely not of lesser importance than the first, opera has the ability to bring unity among people as it transcends and communicates emotions to the audience without them having to be in that specific life situation.

Before I started recapping my journey with *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* in this chapter, I found myself unhappy with what had happened to Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, a story that I believe has ample amounts of lessons in politics, life, love and passion waiting to be taught to its audiences. I thought it was a shame for such an important and current plot to be disassembled and rewired to the state of quality it currently resides in.

The *Alla Breve* concept (as described in the study above) is such an innovative way of bringing opera, and the touching lessons we learn from it, to people who usually do not enjoy opera or necessary have the means to experience it in live performance, that it would be a shame if we actually get these people to fill the seats, but the wrong messages were conveyed from the stage. My drive is to communicate the original lessons of *Don Giovanni* - lessons of love, fidelity, passion, marriage and ultimately taking responsibility for ones' action. As a starting point to explore the source of my discomfort and formulate the questions that this

thesis would like to answer, I will provide an ethnographic description of the process that lead to the production as well as the performances themselves.

## **The preparation**

Approaching the end of my 2<sup>nd</sup> year (2012) at the university of Cape Town, I was asked by the UCT opera school's head coach, Lisa Engelbrecht, if I would be interested in taking part in a new venture into the South African operatic market for the opera company *Opera in Darling*. This is a small opera company that forms part of the annual Darling Music Experience (*DME*), a music festival that is mounted for the locals in the surrounding areas, covering all the regular opera goers as well as those who might not have the financial means to see fully staged operas at big theatres. The company was launched on the initiative of a German gentleman, Alfred Legner, who currently resides in South Africa and who wanted to bring opera to the small towns along the west coast of the Western Cape, because, as mentioned above, the locals might find it financially more suitable, while not having to travel great distances to access opera on the big stages in Cape Town. Engelbrecht asked me if I would be willing to sing the title role in one of Mozart's three collaborative works with Lorenzo Da Ponte - *Don Giovanni*.

After giving her proposal some thought that evening, I accepting the offer the next day with one goal in mind – gaining experience. At that time, my stage performance CV included only two operatic roles, one being Schaunard in Puccini's *La Bohème* and the other Guglielmo in Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*. The opportunity seemed just what I needed to grow my repertoire. After informing Engelbrecht of my decision, I found the Bärenreiter edition of *Don Giovanni* (at the W.H. Bell Music Library) as I was taught throughout my undergraduate training at UCT that this was the best edition to be used because of its close connection to the original *urtext* of Mozart's manuscripts. The next day I started studying the role. I immediately felt a strong connection to the role as, apart from the fact that it is a role I have been striving to sing, the character has flourishing arias and enchanting melodic lines in the ensembles, and I share its name (Johannes in Italian). I spent quite some time on the *recitativi secchi* (as discussed below), which *Don Giovanni* has ample amounts of, as there exists an entire process that needs to be followed in order to perform a believable and fluent speechlike *recitativo*.

### ***On opera: notes on recitativo secco***

Note: My knowledge on the subject on *recitativo secco* was passed down to me as part

of my undergraduate studies at UCT Opera School. *Recitativo secco* formed part of the “Lyric Diction” course and was presented by Angelo Gobbato.

*Recitativo secco* (as visible in Image 2.1 below), is accompanied by *continuo* only, as opposed to *recitativo accompagnato* which is accompanied by the full ensemble (Downes, 1961: 50). It can in certain ways be compared to the dialogue one finds in other works of Mozart, such as his Singspiel *Die Zauberflöte* as well as in operettas such as Johann Strauss’ *Die Fledermaus*. It is because of its close relation to speech that it seemed the logical section to replace with spoken dialogue in the *Alla Breve* version. The main musical numbers of the opera are divided through the use of these *recitativi* in the same way the dialogue is used to divide the musical numbers of the works mentioned above, however the only difference between them is that the text in *recitativi* are set to pitches composed by the composer. *Recitativo secco* is the portion of the opera where one finds the most furthering of the plot. It employs no repetition of words and can be found in the form of either a monologue or a dialogue (Gobbato, 2011).

These *recitativi* are accompanied by continuo instruments were, in Mozart’s time, was either the harpsichord or the fortepiano along with a single cello as basso continuo. Because one does not deliver these *recitativi* with the accompaniment of the full orchestra, it can be seen as stylistically incorrect to sing these lines with the vocal heft one would employ in the music numbers. It is for exactly this reason that a *recitativo secco* should be delivered in a fluent speech-like sound. Although not completely spoken, one should find a comfortable balance between singing and speaking for these lines (Gobbato, 2011).

There are many other performance practice guidelines that need to be understood whilst performing a *recitativo*. Firstly, it is important to notice that any one measure of *recitativo secco* always amounts to four crotchets (as seen in Image 2.1 below). It is because of this compositional style that it is not imperative to sing these lines in the rhythmical precision one usually requires for Mozart’s musical numbers. It is the responsibility of the performer to interpret these lines to make grammatical sense and then to adapt the rhythm of the written note values and rests to match the singer’s intention. This means that the performer will often sing through rests, change the written rhythms and rest where there are no written rests in the bar. The only aspect of these *recitativi* that is not allowed to be changed are the pitches that Mozart wrote. It is

imperative to ensure that the intention the performer chooses has the ability to function within the framework of Mozart's notes (Gobbato, 2011).

The image shows a musical score for a recitativo secco from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Act two. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system has two vocal staves at the top: the left is for the Graf (Count) and the right is for the Графиня (Countess). Below them are two staves for the keyboard and double bass. The second system has a vocal staff for the Graf and two staves for the keyboard and double bass. The third system has two staves for the keyboard and double bass. The lyrics are in Italian and are written below the vocal staves.

Image 2.1: *Recitativo Secco* – Extract from W. A. Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Act two. (<http://www.belcanto.ru/recitativo.html>).

Evident from the above, the preparation process for these *recitativi* is rather lengthy and in depth. My process started with the translation of the Italian text to English including a reordering of the sentence structure – this needed to be done because of the unfamiliar way in which the Italians construct their sentences relevant to the construction of sentences to native English speakers. This was then followed by a translation of the Italian into my home language (Afrikaans) to ensure an in depth understanding of what every word means.

For example, in Image 2.1 above, the first line *Dunque voi non aprite* translated word-for-word means, “Then you (formal - Italian employs the use of a formal and informal form of the second person singular) not open?” To make this understandable to a native English speaker the line would be reordered to, “So you (the English language does not distinguish between “you” formal and “you” informal) are not going to open then?” Translated into Afrikaans the line would read, “So gaan u nie oopmaak nie?” This process, as described by Angelo Gobbato, is the process of connecting the written words of the *recitativo* to your “soul” (2011) or sub-conscious, allowing the text to be acted and sung as an involuntary emotion (referring to the subtext of each line) rather than a cognitive reciting of studied texts (Gobbato, 2011).

After spending much time and energy on this process I learnt a week or two later that the role, without me being informed, had been reserved for auditions that were now open to the public. Duly angered by this change of events I decided not to sign up for the auditions and informed the producer (Legner) and Engelbrecht that I was no longer available.

Shortly afterwards, the cast had been selected and music rehearsals started – naturally without me. The cast included Sandile Sikhosana (Don Giovanni), Siyabulela Ntlale (Leporello), Makudupanyane Senaoana (Don Ottavio), Nomsa Mpofu (Donna Anna), Victoria Stevens (Donna Elvira), Janel Speelman (Zerlina) and Phelo Nodlayiya (Masetto/Commendatore). The production was led by Engelbrecht as musical director and Christiaan Olwagen as stage director.

A few weeks later I received a call from Engelbrecht, asking me to participate in the production, however, this time she needed me for the role of Leporello as the chosen singer seemed to be unavailable and the producers were not able to find another suitable low male voice in the school to fill the role. This came as quite a surprise to me, but due to my inability to say no and constantly trying to please everyone around me, I accepted the plea with the primary goal of gaining experience and building repertoire.

The acceptance to perform the role of Leporello, presented me with another set of challenges. Firstly, the role was out of my *Fach* as Leporello is usually sung by a bass-baritone, meaning that although the role was not impossible for me to perform, it was vocally out of my comfort zone. Secondly, I needed to make a mental shift - performing a character of nobility such as Don Giovanni is much different from portraying a peasant character that serves nobility such as Leporello.

This time the onus was not on me to source the score as *Opera in Darling* provided me with a score. On closer inspection I noticed that the score did not match the usual format of alternating *recitativi* and musical numbers. Firstly, I observed that there was no musical notation, but only text in the form of dialogue. The dialogue was only terminated at certain points with the title of the musical number that needed to be performed at that given point in the script. An example of this is given in Image 2.2 below.

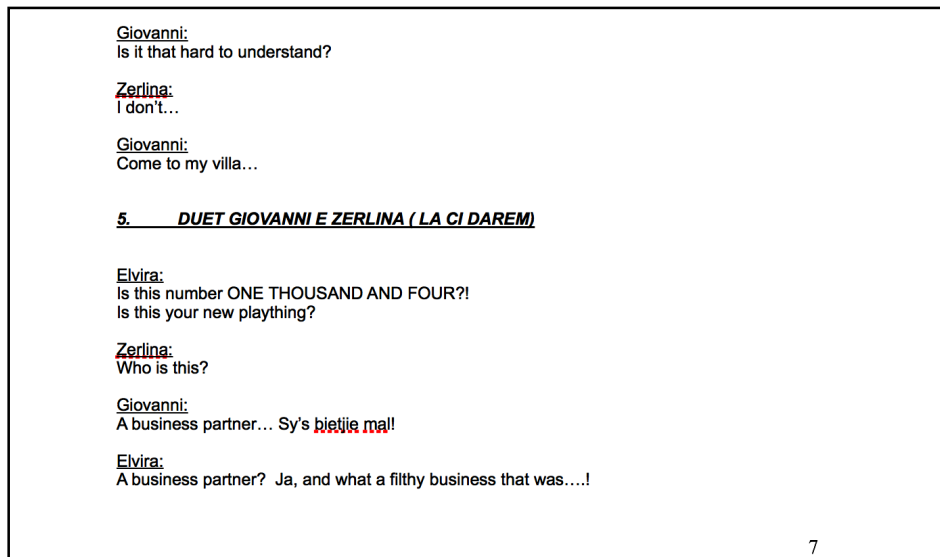


Image 2.2: Extract from *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* – Page 7.

(Kuchinka, A. & Dias, J. 2012. *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*).

After reading through the score supplied by DME I found that quite a few sections of the original work including most of the main musical numbers of the primary opera, were omitted. After further inspection I noticed similarities between the dialogue I was given and the *recitativi* of the original opera. The dialogue was intended to replace the *recitativi*. This was later confirmed by Engelbrecht and Legner.

It turned out that the dialogue that replaced the sung *recitativi secchi*, was newly written by a German gentleman, Alexander Kuchinka. After Legner bought the performance rights to the production he employed local musician José Dias to translate the original German dialogue into the various South African languages (English, Xhosa and Afrikaans) that was now part of the score, evident in Image 2.2 above.

Although the role had its range of vocal difficulties for me as a baritone, it was appealing to me as in this specific version Leporello (as mentioned above) acted as the narrator, requiring much interaction with the audience. My role became linked to the thrill of making the audience laugh, given that this version of the opera was written with the focus on highlighting comical elements through incorporating many amusing lines. One finds an example of this in Leporello's introductory dialogue that aims to highlight all the flaws in each character's personality except that of Don Giovanni's - contrasting to the original opera, Leporello seems to defend Don Giovanni's endeavours in the current *Alla Breve* version – more of this later in the study.

Because the character of Leporello acts as the narrator of the storyline, my character had

much spoken dialogue that needed to be studied. Although opera is a so-called “gesamtkunzwerk,” incorporating many different art forms such as stage acting, singing and design, the *Alla Breve* concept presented me with a new challenge, - I have never before acted (or delivered dialogue) without singing.

### ***On opera: notes on acting***

It is important to note that there exists a rather large difference between the acting on stage one finds in theatrical drama and acting in the capacity of an opera singer. Acting in a theatrical dramatic play requires stage technique and the ability to retain a large amount of lines that can be delivered at any speed or intention the actor feels fit.

Parallel to this, acting on an opera stage also requires much stage technique as well as the ability to retain information (not only text but also musical lines), but the main difference is that we as opera singers do not have the luxury of delivering our lines (both text and musical) at a speed we feel fit, because our intentions, speed of acting and delivering of lines are all dependent on the composed music that is accompanying us. It is for exactly this reason that I was out of my comfort zone as I was used to having the metric backing of the music that accompanied me.

It soon became clear to me that the original text of this opera as printed in the Bärenreiter score (and therefore closer to what Mozart and Da Ponte intended) is very much a tragic opera (as discussed in the introduction to this thesis) with a great deal of representation of darkness and death, while the *Alla Breve* production I was taking part in, dispensed with the darker characteristics of this work and foregrounded comical elements. In my experience the tragic *Don Giovanni* had been changed into a sitcom.

### ***On opera: notes on being an “artist”***

Initially I had no objection to the *Alla Breve* concept, as it allowed me to be an artist. Many a time in my career as an opera student have I uttered the words, “opera singers cannot be constituted to be artists”<sup>2</sup>. This is because of the demands that are put on us through figures such as staging directors, conductors and lighting designers (to name but a few). Between the director telling you when you should be moving and what emotion you should be experiencing whilst executing that move, the conductor telling

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<sup>2</sup> To date I have never come across a fellow opera singer that share my sentiments in this regard, however through my experience as a singer on the international front over the past seven years, it is my personal belief that we as opera singers have much less freedom within our art form than artists in other disciplines such as fine art.



you at exactly what dynamic and tempo to sing a certain phrase and the lighting designer telling you exactly where to stand so you are well lit, there is extremely little freedom left for personal interpretation of a role on the opera stage - a freedom that the *Alla Breve* concept partially restored. This is to my mind the most noticeable difference between an artist and an operatic performer - freedom.

The staging of the opera was an additional interest of mine. At the first rehearsal the director (Christian Olwagen) devised the staging concept around seven chairs. These chairs acted as seats for the characters when they were not singing and the idea was that these inactive characters simply became part of the audience - but on stage. The chairs were also the sole extent of the set design. They were used for various customs; for example: to stand on in Don Giovanni's *Finc'han dal Vino*, or to hide behind for Leporello in the *Sestetto* and for some of the seduction work in *La ci darem la mano*.

This very alternative outlook on the staging concept is something I found rather appealing. I believe that streamlining opera within a contemporary society (with specific reference to staging concepts and not the score) in an attempt to keep it visually more accessible and appealing to our modern times and youthful audiences (not to mention the reduction in cost), is one of the main lifelines that seems to be keeping staged opera sustainable on most international frontiers - Germany being at the foreground (Stevens, 2014).

The staging employed very few props and because of this, scene changes were never physically executed. They were merely mentioned as part of the script and the audience's imaginations were free to sketch the scenes and fill in 'the missing detail', that usually is done through a scene or set change. This became (through the concept of Olwagen) a very important aspect of the *Alla Breve* concept, as this allowed the audience members to freely interpret the surroundings of the scene. It is imperative to note that audience interaction played a vital part in the *Alla Breve* notion, but here interaction was demanded from the audience not only on a physical level, but equally on a cognitive level, because creating the layout of the scene was up to the mind's-eye of each individual audience member. The employment of this theatrical devise seemed to keep the audience engaged for the entire duration of the performance. Although we as "artists" would like to believe that, 'keeping the audience engaged', is the main reason for the minimalist use of sets and props, unfortunately, economics has always prevailed. This aspect of the concept inevitably requires much less financial support and saves much money on production costs.



This approach to stage a production (that became the default for the *Alla Breve* concept) inevitably re-opened opera as a part of business' scope to the local investors market. Many local businessmen who are the driving forces behind Western art music festivals in the Western Cape saw *Opera Alla Breve* as a feasible investment opportunity to further the size and development of their respective festivals. It is due to the favourable economical presentation (as can be concluded below) that local art festivals showed the highest levels of interest in producing *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*.<sup>3</sup>

Although I found the concept of the *Alla Breve* format strange and unusual, none of my other cast members expressed uneasiness with any of the production aspects. They seemed to accept the alterations of the text, music and staging without question. On the other hand, as often the case, the cast had little time to prepare for the debut of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* in Darling. Because of this, we were left with no time to think about details besides getting the show done and dusted.

## **The execution**

For the remainder of this ethnography I have divided the succession of performances into sub-categories to ensure a thick description of changes and alterations that were devised for each of the fifteen performances in seven productions. They have been listed in chronological order of performance dates.

### **I. Performance one and two: *Darling Music Experience* - 09 & 16 February 2013**

After approximately a month (which might sound like much time but proved to be too little to stage even a reduced opera) of staging rehearsals over the December vacation of 2012, the first performance of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2013 at 14h00 in a small art gallery seating about 150 people in Darling, a small town on the west coast of the Western Cape, South Africa. The art gallery was situated on the outskirts of this little town in an old rusty barn. Besides our seven chairs and the piano that stood to our left hand side, there was nothing more to be said about the performance space - no stage and no lighting.

The venue however provided several practical problems with regard to opera performance. Firstly, we had no dressing rooms, hence very little privacy, and all the cast members needed to share a communal dress changing area. Secondly, the only chairs that the venue could

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<sup>3</sup>The economical sustainability of the *Alla Breve* concept will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

arrange for these performances were seven high bar-stools. This proved to be a challenge considering that a number of the cast members needed to get on top of the chairs at some point in the production. Lastly, I recall the temperature in Darling on that specific day was in the high thirties and because of the lively characterization of Leporello, I was forced to remove my suite jacket and roll up my shirt sleeves in the run of that specific performance. It was interesting to try and integrate this as part of the act, because by the time the performance got to the latter part, it was time for Leporello and Don Giovanni to exchange clothing before *Deh Vieni alla finestra*. As I no longer had my jacket with me to make the exchange with Don Giovanni possible, it required quick thinking and improvising. The cast managed to work through the challenges that were presented and the performance was considered a success by the team whom ultimately enjoyed performing the final product.

As mentioned above, audience participation is a crucial part of the Alla Breve concept in its current state of existence. At many points in the production there are different forms of interaction with the audience. These range from characters simply addressing the audience (such as in Leporello's introductory monologue in which I for example introduced the other characters on stage to the audience) to audience members assisting with action on stage. An example of this is in Don Giovanni's serenade, *Deh vieni alla Finestra*, when Don Giovanni fetches a lady from the audience to stand on one of the seven chairs whilst holding up a window frame. Don Giovanni then delivers his serenade to her (as Donna Elvira's chamber maid) through the window, as the libretto of the aria suggests.

The audience members (most of whom attended from small towns surrounding the Darling area such as Yzerfontein, Port Owen and Langebaan) mentioned time and again at the after party on the lower level of the barn, that it was an amazing feeling being at an opera performance and understanding the full extent of the story line (whether they understood the differences in the story line from the original opera libretto to the current altered version, we would not know) and being so involved with the characters on stage – this because, as mentioned above, the audience members are asked to assist the characters on the performance space with, for example, taking pictures in Masetto and Zerlina's *Giovinetti che fate la more* and answering Leporello's questions in the dialogue preceding the act one finale, *Trema, trema*.

After all the excitement and the second performance in Darling on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2013 in the same performance venue, which presented performance challenges parallel to those initially experienced, I returned to the university to further my academic studies with no

thought about the underlying issues that were of concern to me in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* – issues of text authenticity, text and plot adaptability and/or truthfulness to the libretto.

## II. Performance three: @Windstone Vredenburg - 26 July 2013

In the winter of 2013, it was decided that the production should be performed again and this time I was asked to sing the title role of a re-casted *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, because the previous lead needed to be replaced. I was the only logical option as I knew the production and I was the right voice *Fach* for the role.

Preparing the role of Don Giovanni required of me to make a paradigm shift with regard to characterization. I was no longer a servant but nobility. (The contrast between the two characters are rather great and require ample amounts of preparation time, as I went from a very horizontally orientated or humble character to a very vertically orientated and egocentric character.) The switch to this character is one that I am still often not fully secure with.

With the decision of performing this production once again, came some changes (as is the case in many revivals of productions in the opera industry). An entire new cast was selected. They were Phelo Nodlayiya (Leporello), Raimondo van Staden (Masetto/Commendatore), Janel Speelman (Zerlina), Nomsa Mpofu (Donna Anna), Beverly Du Plessis (Donna Elvira), Makudupanyane Senaoana (Don Ottavio) and myself as Don Giovanni. The production stage director had also been changed due to Olwagen having prior engagements. Neil Moss, a student at UCT Opera School at the time, was asked to step in as re-staging director.

In the context of this second production and the rehearsal proses that followed, many questions were raised. Firstly, in the rehearsal process the stage director (Moss) informed me that I was allowed to adjust the script to make the dialogue easier to memorize and to “make it more comical for the audience.” I felt a sense of discomfort. I wondered whether this could be right? Was I not fiddling with the meaning of the original opera including the thread of Da Ponte’s libretto by having all this freedom to adjust the text to my liking? A question I couldn’t answer at the time because of the quickly approaching performances in Vredenburg and Oudtshoorn Klein Karoo Klassique (KKK) festival. Because of time constraints no changes were made to the overarching staging concept. The only alterations that were made, were additions and omissions of certain dialogue lines within the libretto.

My experience of our performance in Vredenburg is not one that I often like to reminisce about. The performance was held on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July 2013 in a marquee tent that was permanently fixated on the premises. The venue was called “@Windstone”. The audience sat

on white plastic garden furniture and the overall atmosphere of the evening was not one of outstanding beauty, poise and charisma. For this performance we had a stage to perform on with the piano situated off-stage on floor level next to the performance platform.

The stage, although being rather generous in size, did not offer enough performance space. This was because the venue could not supply us with our usual seven upright chairs and instead we were given two long and extremely narrow benches lined with blue and purple material. It was because of this performance space constraint that lead Moss to devise a plan to move portions of the action downstage, in an attempt to rectify the challenge of performance space. In that afternoon the staging of the duet *La ci darem*, the quartet *Non ti fidar* as well as the graveyard trio was changed to allow all action to revolve on and around the steps that lead from the stage to the audience on the floor level. The two benches on stage were used for the other numbers as initially rehearsed.

The lighting for this performance was somewhat better considering that we actually had lighting - a luxury that the cast was not used to at that point in time. At the conclusion of the performance I looked forward to returning to my room to enjoy a relaxing dinner, unfortunately this was not the case.

On arrival at my room, a middle aged gentleman introduced himself to me as the owner of @Windstone and the producer of that evening's performance. After congratulating me on a sturdy performance, he suggested that I, as well as my fellow cast members should have considered lowering our performance fee as he had such a small return on his investment and that no singer should perform at such high fees.

### ***On opera: notes on financial implications & economical sustainability***

I need to stress that opera in general runs at a loss and this is the main reason why opera in South Africa is dependent on sponsorships. Opera is no longer a state funded art form as it was in the past. There is always more money exhausted than gained, however in professional theatres these circumstances are understood and artists are never questioned about their performance fees as the professional opera community understands that, as within any industry, we are professionals in what we do and we expect to be compensated for it accordingly. If overhead costs prove to be high, they will mostly be brought down by using less props, shrinking the set or reducing the orchestra, but the fee of the singer will seldom be tampered with.

Performance fees differ for each performance. These fees are often decided on by the

producer of a specific production. In its current state of existence, the industry can offer between R5000 and R10000 for a medium sized role while bigger and title roles can easily earn double that. These amounts usually include a two to three-week rehearsal period. Our performance fees for *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* (which we had no input on) at this point was R2500, irrespective of the size of the role, amount of performances and irrespective of the amount of rehearsal time that was needed.

@Windstone did not run at a loss. With performance fees being lower than usual and production fees amounting to the minimum, this gentleman was merely hoping for a bigger return on his investment. This is one of the reasons behind the success of the Alla Breve concept - there is a much higher security rate that the producer will not run at a loss, because of the low production fees.

Duly angered by this gentleman, I excused myself for the evening, however I still felt most uncomfortable about what he had said as I was paid a pittance for the rehearsal process and all the performances as a whole.

### III. Performance four: *Klein Karoo Klassique (KKK)* - 09 August 2013

Two weeks later, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2013, I was on my way to Oudtshoorn for our performance at the annual Klein Karoo Klassique (KKK) festival. Contrary to the previous performance I could not have asked for better treatment as a performer. Everyone was friendly and we were looked after to the best of the producer's ability. The performance venue however, was something that got me thinking about the Alla Breve concept in its current state of existence. We performed in the ABSA Civic Centre and this was the first time that the production was performed in such a large-scale theatre that supplied all performance-technical needs. The cast was pleasantly surprised when we arrived at the theatre, as we were not informed about the performance space prior to leaving Cape Town. The new and unfamiliar performance space however provided its own set of challenges. Firstly, the aspect of audience participation was challenging, because the stage did not grant the cast access to the audience level. This resulted in audience participation being cut from the production for that specific performance. The other major realization was that the Alla Breve format was not really suited for a big theatre, because of the intimate nature of the production and the level of communication that is required between the performer and audience members.

### ***On opera: notes on intimacy of Mozart's operas***

The industrial revolution combined with the compositions of Giuseppe Verdi and his contemporaries in the post-romantic period, changed operatic performance practice as a whole - even for works of composers before said time period. For the most part, Mozart's operas were very intimate happenings. They were usually written for members of royalty and were often performed within the personal theatres of these aristocrats. Sets were smaller, singers were more static on stage and the orchestra was roughly half the size of orchestras used for contemporary retellings of Mozart operas. One example of this (amongst many) is Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienne*. Written at the tender age of eleven, this opera was premièred in the garden theatre of Dr. Mesmer as a private performance in the Viennese summer of 1768 (Loewenberg, 1942: 319). It is because of this knowledge that the *Opera Alla Breve* form is so well suited to the operatic works of Mozart - they were intended to be intimate (Dippenaar, 2016).

Secondly, the stage was grossly oversized for the concept of the production. In an attempt to try and control the amount of performance space we had to our disposal, Moss closed the stage curtain, allowing us to only use the performance space on the front shoulder of the stage. This might sound like an insufficient amount of performance space; however, it was one of the biggest stages the cast has had up until that point. To fill up the stage, Moss decided that the action that played off on the stairs (because of performance space constraints, as mentioned above) at the Vredenburg venue was such a pleasant idea, he introduced an additional small chair at the front end of the stage replacing the steps that was used as action space in the Vredenburg performance.

Thirdly, the absence of audience participation demanded much more energy from the entire cast's overall performance, as we were no longer capable of bringing the audience into the production, we needed to make much more effort to project our performance as a whole, towards the audience.

### ***On opera: increasing and sustaining the size of the performer's performance***

Theatre director, Matthew Wild, states that as a performer, your task on stage is threefold. Firstly, to sing, secondly to act the character and thirdly to ensure you have a noticeable presence on stage. For the latter, one has but a few options that can potentially allow you to increase the size of your stage presence. The most important of these, is using the analogy of a tree, very similar to the analogy used in yoga

instruction. One is required to literary think that your feet are growing roots through the floor, that you are tall and that you have long branches extending from your arms horizontally. This opens up the body and the chest. If this is combined with lifting your chin so that your eyes are level with the back row of the theatre, you can be sure that your presence on a large stage will be noticeable irrespective of how small you might feel or be in reality (Wild, 2011).

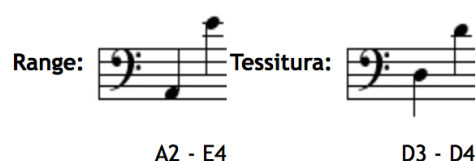
The demand to adapt to a different performance environment at every new venue and at short notice, keeps performers engaged and focused on their performances. When a performer performs a certain work too often within a short time frame, (often on stage) the performer enters a state of “auto-pilot” were all the mechanics of the performance are in place, however there is little conscious effort to make the performance come alive and exciting. It is never a negative tool to ensure that performers are taken out of their comfort zones. This especially assists the performer when he/she needs to perform the same work many times in a short space of time, ensuring a sustainable performance.

#### IV. Performance five: Greyton Genadendal Classics for All - 30 May 2014

A fifth performance of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* was held in Greyton on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 2014. For this performance I was once again changed back to the part of Leporello. The dynamics of this show in particular were interesting, as our title character at that time, could not sustain the high tessitura of Don Giovanni’s vocal part.

##### ***On opera: notes on range and tessitura***

Leporello range and tessitura:



Don Giovanni range and tessitura:



Image 2.3: Illustration of range and tessitura of Leporello versus Don Giovanni. (<http://www.aria-database.com/search.php?sid=04236d2a286df703ded1c82913e11562&X=1&individualOpera=10>).

Range (as illustrated in Image 2.3) refers to the distance between the singer’s lowest and highest note. However, within this range any singer has a comfort region. The tessitura is exactly that which illustrates this most comfortable “zone” of the voice



needed to perform a given role. Tessitura could also be seen as the musical interval in which the bulk of a certain role is written. When casting a singer in their respective roles, it is imperative that their comfort zone is aligned with the tessitura of the part. The author's views above are duly supported by James McKinney in his book *The Diagnosis & Correction of Vocal Faults*.

*"Whereas range is concerned with the total compass of a vocal part of a singer. Tessitura is concerned with that part of the range which is receiving the most use; it may refer to the voice part itself or to how the singer relates to it."* (McKinney, 2005: \_\_)

Although the characters of Leporello and Don Giovanni differ in range, it is the difference in tessitura that makes Leporello a bass-baritone and Don Giovanni a baritone. Because the bulk of Don Giovanni's notes resided outside of our leading man's comfort zone at the time (not to mention the difficulty he experienced with retaining the large volumes of dialogue in the script), Engelbrecht requested that Leporello and Don Giovanni switch melody lines in the ensemble numbers<sup>4</sup>.

Yet again, I was astonished at all the changes that were being made to this opera. Not only was the libretto being tampered with, but also the music. *Don Giovanni*, a heart-wrenching story, was now a sitcom-like comedy, which, to my mind, had increasingly less in common with the intent of Mozart's Original opera and/or Da Ponte's original libretto.

Yet again, because of time constraints, I had no time to raise my concerns and started studying Leporello. The performance in Greyton was one of my most enjoyable. Although the production once again had a new cast, this time I was ecstatic to work with some of our new members. They were locally known soprano Beverly Chiat and internationally renowned Violina Anguelov, a professional mezzo-soprano of great repute. Chiat sung the role of Donna Anna and Anguelov was cast in the role of Donna Elvira. Although Leporello and Donna Elvira do not have much interaction on stage in the current reduced version, I was nevertheless happy to share the stage with such great singers. The level of professionalism

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<sup>4</sup> Although such switching of vocal lines can be done in certain Mozart operas (an example of this is in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, where it is always understood and marked in the score that Il Conte Almaviva and Don Bartolo's lines in the act two finale can be switched), this cannot be done in *Don Giovanni* as Mozart gave us no liberty indication in his score to do so as he did in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.



and the amount of understanding on the concepts of historically informed performance practice (HIPP) of Mozart's music that Anguelov brought to the production encouraged me to invest that much more into my performance as Leporello.

***On opera: Anguelov's approach to HIPP of Mozart***

Anguelov's approach to Mozart in an historically informed manner, very closely matches that of my knowledge of the subject, seeing as we both received our basic training from the same institution. With this said, it was a wonderful reminder seeing a professional of such international standard applying this knowledge. Firstly, she stayed clear of the "Bell Canto" singing style. This means that she never scooped between pitches and instead purely attacked each note with no sign of preparation for them. Secondly, the amount of vibrato in her voice was lower than in her usual performance practice, as Mozart's music calls for a less assertive style of singing in comparison to that of Verdi's music for example. Vibrato was furthermore seen as ornamentation in Mozart's compositional era (Dippenaar, 2016) – more on this later in the thesis. Lastly, her attention to the specific dynamics Mozart gave Donna Elvira was followed perfectly, as Mozart's repertoire overall demands a clear understanding of the dynamics in each scene.

The performance space itself was back to its originally intended intimate nature. The performance took place in a small church just off the main road that runs through this little town. With an audience of about 200 people (although Greyton has socially and politically divided population groups, it was predominantly the people from the town itself and not those from the neighbouring Genadendal on the outskirts of town, that attended), it became apparent that the reputation surrounding this production, to be an up-beat, funny and energetic performance, has started to reach the local opera followers in Cape Town, as the size of the audience was the biggest we have had up to date. This was ironic considering that the production had the largest audience attendance in the smallest town.

This was the last performance that I sung with *Opera in Darling* as an undergraduate student at UCT as I graduated in December of that year. Considering that I moved to a different academic institution to further my graduate studies, I thought (at that point in time) my journey with *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* had reached its end.

**V. Performance six: *Oude Libertas amphitheatre, Stellenbosch* - 30 January 2015**

At the turn of 2015 I enrolled for my postgraduate studies at the University of Stellenbosch.

Initially I thought this would present me with challenges as UCT was the feeding organization of singers to *Opera in Darling*, however, Legner and Engelbrecht did not seem to mind having a non-UCT student on board.

Starting my 2015 performance calendar, *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* was performed, for the sixth time, in the *Oude Libertas* amphitheatre in Stellenbosch on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2015 under the stage direction of fellow cast member, Raimondo van Staden. Here I was again asked to sing the title role of Don Giovanni, as the main character of the previous performance was no longer available.

The performance at *Oude Libertas* amphitheatre reminded me of my experience in Oudtshoorn, for no other reason than the large size of the performance space. Adding to this we unfortunately did not have a stage curtain that we could use to make the stage smaller. Although the auditorium only seated about four hundred people, the stage was one of the biggest that *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* needed to fill up to date. This again demanded from me to literally open up the character by lifting my head and widening my chest to ensure that my performance filled the entire stage through following the same process as I did prior to the Oudtshoorn performance (as discussed earlier in this chapter). Contrary to Oudtshoorn, the cast (whom was yet again reverted to the cast of the Vredenburg performance) had all the necessary interaction with the audience.

The lighting of this performance was done tastefully and added much depth and emotional vibrancy to the scene through the integration of different colours on stage. It was the second time that we were fortunate enough to perform with professional lighting, but compared to the first time in Vredenburg, this was on a much higher aesthetic level.

In this performance, I was, for the first time in my operatic career, faced with a different discipline - sound engineering. Because *Oude Libertas* amphitheatre is an open-air amphitheatre, foundational techniques with regard to the acoustic values and reactions of the human voice, could not have been applied.

### ***On opera: notes on acoustics***

As an opera student, one is taught all basic acoustical properties (as part of my BMus degree presented by Morné Bezuidenhoudt), not only of the human voice, but also of interior theatre design, to ensure that we are always audible irrespective of where or how we perform. Whilst singing one should always try and access your natural resonators. They are your nasal passages, pharynx, mouth, chest and sinuses (Stolzenbach, 1964:

232). Once these have been accessed, one has a natural level of acoustical liveliness that one produces. However, when this is used within an opera house where the walls are wooden (wood absorbs low frequencies and acts as a refractor creating a greater acoustical sound) and the floors have carpets (although carpet absorbs high frequencies it is not a major sound refractor), the sound is exponentially bigger and reaches the audience through sound-refraction that bounces off the wood from various different directions within the theatre, while extremely high vibrations are absorbed by the carpets and upholstery, creating a well-balanced sound. (Bezuidenhout, 2011)(Ulrike, 2006: 1447). However, when you are faced with a situation where there are no solid objects on the walls or a roof for your sound to project against, you will not be clearly audible to the audience, irrespective of the size of your natural resonating voice - as was the case at the *Oude Libertas* amphitheatre.

To overcome this, each cast member was given a head microphone that (rather uncomfortably) hooked onto your ear and extended to the side of your mouth. This was an unfamiliar experience to me. As an experienced singer, one sings on the feeling of vocal production and vocal placement (not on the sound accumulating in your skull) and only listens to the sound that is refracted back to you from the theatre or opera house, but here, because we had no sound monitors, we were one hundred percent reliable upon trust. I needed to trust that the sound engineer would not allow my voice to be dominated by the piano as I was in no position to adjust my volume levels accordingly. This unfortunately does present singers with one challenge - pushing.

### ***On opera: vocal pushing***

Singers often tend to push their voices to create a greater vocal heft if they are not in a position to hear themselves. This was the case at the *Oude Libertas* amphitheatre. Because we had no monitor speakers and I had no acoustical feedback ensuring me that my voice was traveling, I (including my fellow cast members) started to push. This was something I noticed in my singing, as I was constantly out of breath. I felt it the most prominently in the amount of tension in my jaw (each singer reacts differently to pushing. When I push my body tenses up and my jaw suffers from an ample amount of tension, resulting in my voice falling back into my throat. This causes me to cover my higher register rather early in the vocal range making the role much more taxing to sing than it actually is).

After the performance I asked my fellow cast members whether they also felt fatigued, and we all agreed that we were pushing through our respective performances that evening.

#### VI. Performance seven: *UCT, SACM* - 17 May 2015

After much contemplation, it was finally decided by Legner that it was time for *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* to tread international grounds and preparations started for our tour to the Tricycle Theatre in London, United Kingdom. With Engelbrecht still at the lead as musical director and Van Staden as staging director the cast for the London tour was chosen with the following cast members: Raimondo van Staden as staging director and Leporello, Martin Mkize (our previous Don Giovanni) as Masetto and Commendatore, Amanda Meke as Zerlina, Goitsewang Lehobye as Donna Elvira, Maudeé Montierre as Donna Anna, Makudupanyane Senaoana as Don Ottavio and myself as Don Giovanni. Because of the huge financial burden to tour with seven singers and an accompanist to London for two weeks, the decision was made to perform the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* once before we left for London. This performance would function as a fundraiser for the tour to the UK and we would not be financially compensated for it. Although there were two newly appointed cast members, we were only left with five working days to rehearse for this performance because of the University of Cape Town's production of Verdi's *La Traviata* that took up most of the cast's time.

An isolated moment in the rehearsal process for this performance that made a deep impression on me was when we were scheduled to rehearse the death trio at the end of the opera. Engelbrecht suggested that Don Giovanni, after being dragged down to hell by the demons of the Commendatore, should rise again to join the cast in the presto section of the act two finale of the opera with the preceding dialogue of Don Giovanni reading: "Dr. E, I am dead now, may I go home?" Engelbrecht replied by saying no and that Don Giovanni should have joined the cast in singing *Questo è il fin*. This was implemented by Engelbrecht although Van Staden did not approve of the idea, as through much interaction with him, it had become apparent that he was also aiming toward a more authentic production. Van Staden was in no position to challenge Engelbrecht, as he was still a student of hers at that time. Engelbrecht believed this would increase the comical aspect to the production as she felt the ending was too dull to her liking.

In a structured interview with Engelbrecht in September 2015, she made it clear that in

retrospect this might not have been the best decision, although she expressed the fact that she was not a staging director, in her defence. She argued that the ending of the production needed to be freshened up and, considering that this performance was seen as a public rehearsal to the London tour, it was the perfect opportunity to put this new idea to the test (Engelbrecht, 2015).

In conversation with Kamal Khan, director of the University of Cape Town Opera School, he expressed a certain level of understanding towards Engelbrecht's decision to change the pre-sto finale. He compared this scene to the epilogue one finds at the end of I. Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress* where all the characters of the opera step out of character and become "normal" people who address the audience directly about the lessons one should take from the plot of the opera. He argues that this scene in *Don Giovanni* does not truly form part of the plot of the opera, but rather functions as an epilogue to the opera. According to Khan this outlook justifies the changes that Engelbrecht brought to this specific part of the production (Khan, 2016).

Having started with my proposal to this thesis, I was stunned at the fact that Da Ponte's original libretto and the climactic point of the plot was changed to such an extent that the storyline no longer ringed true to, not only the libretto, but also to the original legends of Don Juan dating back to the sixteenth century. Here for the first time a fellow cast member, Maudeé Montierre (a current PhD student at UCT) who sang the role of Donna Anna, informed Van Staden and the rest of the cast, that she was not comfortable with changing the plot of the story to such a drastic extent. Having had reservations about the alterations for a long time already, I was happy to hear this, because she was the only one that shared my sentiments on this topic up to date.

Based on the interviews I have had with some of the major role players in this production, the drastic alterations along with the foregrounded comedy was for the most part not a great concern. Kuchinka argued that both the comical and the serious elements were present in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, however the comic aspect was highlighted (Kuchinka, 2015). The debate surrounding the serious versus the comical nature of *Don Giovanni* will be discussed in depth later within this study, which might shed some light on Kuchinka's thoughts on this matter. Engelbrecht, chose not to answer the question, as she did not want to interfere with matters "non-musical" - as she put it (Engelbrecht, 2015). Furthermore, Van Staden, although with limits, believed that the comical nature of the production as a whole was the overarching reason for its success, as it transcended emotions to audiences that might not usually enjoy

opera. With this said, he expressed that if it was a fully staged production of *Don Giovanni* with orchestra, he would not have been as comfortable with the comic elements being highlighted (Van Staden, 2015). Lastly, I managed to find one major role player that supported my beliefs surrounding this topic. Legner made it clear that the comical element made him uncomfortable. He said that, especially in *Don Giovanni*, hiding the uncomfortable truth while having a light-hearted approach to the opera, is a difficult and risky balancing act (Legner, 2015).

Nevertheless, the fundraising performance took place on the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2015 at the University of Cape Town, South African Colleges of Music in the C6 rehearsal room. With a rather small audience amounting to seventy people, the changes that were made to the final part of the opera (as explained above) made no impact with the audience in any manner, even though these changes were made in an attempt to create more humour in a tragic plot by nature. Whether they noticed the changes or not we will never know, however they were all members of the local opera lovers group “friends of Cape Town Opera”. Thus one would have expected a larger reaction to the changes that were made, as a group such as this, usually are regular opera supporters and therefore knowledgeable and familiar with the opera. There were many times in the performance that the cast needed to improvise the dialogue, in an attempt to keep the performance going through the many memory slips that occurred from our newly integrated cast members. Despite all my reservations, this was yet again very satisfying for me, as I got the opportunity to improvise and, again, be an artist.

#### VII. Performance eight to fourteen: *Tricycle Theatre, London, UK* - 06 to 11 July 2015

Five weeks had gone by and rehearsals for the international tour to London had started. Beginning rehearsals for an international tour only two weeks before we departed to the United Kingdom proved, yet again, to be too little time to adapt the production to a new stage layout, especially given the staging that changed once again, but this time in favour of my drive towards an authentic plot.

Firstly, Van Staden decided that he wanted to (in contrast to the performance of the 17<sup>th</sup> of May) keep to the original staging of the death trio at the end of the opera. In an interview with Van Staden, he said that although Engelbrecht’s new approach to the final scene of the opera was initially funny, he chose to revert back to the more traditional ending, after a low reaction from the audience at the previous performance (Van Staden, 2015).

Van Staden wanted to stage the scene in such a way that it would have stayed closer to what

Da Ponte intended. The scene originally incorporated demons, a crucial part of the thread that was lost in the previous productions. Before the staging was altered the scene started with the statue of the Commendatore appearing to Don Giovanni and Leporello. The other characters then repeated a line dance (a unison dance routine where all the characters dance in a line formation) in time to the music that was initially used in the act one finale section of the production, however this never communicated the idea of the other characters (chorus in this scene) being demons. The altered staging that Van Staden introduced now saw the chorus of demons enter the scene alongside the Commendatore in a V-formation. On each of the climatic moments in the music (as illustrated as *fp* below) the demons were choreographed to react on instructions given to them by the Commendatore. This resulted in an image of the Commendatore giving life to these demons in order to drag Don Giovanni to hell.



Image 2.4: Extract from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* – Act two finale.

(Mozart, W. A. 2005. *Don Giovanni*. Kassel: Bärenreiter. 408).

Furthermore, because of the highly energetic nature of the production, Van Staden incorporated a bar area upstage to the left of the row of chairs. This was a neutral area where characters would move to catch their breath when they were not singing. This moreover created depth in the scene as we now had three dimensions on stage, all with people sitting on different height levels. The bar table was equipped with plastic glasses and a mixer, allowing for refreshments to be available in the middle of the performance, which helped a great deal to get through a performance, considering that the cast had seven performances in six days.

The on-stage experience at the *Tricycle Theatre* in Kilburn High Road, UK, was one that I will never forget. Although the tour required much dedication in order to complete the large amount of performances, I would at any time in my career return to the *Tricycle Theatre*.

Seating only around two hundred people, this specific theatre was ideal for the intimate nature of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. As mentioned earlier, we have on previous occasions had



the luxury of stage lighting, but here we were fortunate enough to have lighting of truly professional quality. With two full-time lighting engineers dedicated to our production, Van Staden was capable to chase realism (re-creating reality) in our production for the first time since its inception. Lights were bright and energetic in the party scenes, dark and dull in the graveyard scene and with the new staging of the death trio came new lighting and effects. When the Commendatore enters with his demons, the stage saw smoke hanging in the air with lightning bolts coming from the skies followed by a deep red wash on stage, symbolizing death and the representation of hell.

Although the critics gave us all their possible support towards *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, as well as the Alla Breve format itself, it was only in a later interview with Legner, when criticisms made their way to the surface. When asked about the reception of the production in Europe, Legner argued that although we had talented singers on stage, a great accompanist as well as the “rainbow nation bonus” - as he put it - the comical nature of the production required comical acting, something that a few of the cast members had not yet mastered at the time of the performances (Legner, 2015).

Further than the London border, Kuchinka was asked the very same question. Although he made it clear that he did not complete an in-depth reception study, the audiences in Germany (with the original Austrian *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto) was overall excepting of the concept. Kuchinka said that people who do not usually support opera as an art form, was of the opinion that the work was tasteful and amusing. This argument was further supported by the regular opera supporters. One such a supporter told Kuchinka, “I have already seen and heard *Don Giovanni* many times over the last ten years, although I asked myself, what did they actually leave out? I missed nothing.” (Kuchinka, 2015).

## **Sub - conclusion**

Evident through the course of my ethnographical study above, many difficulties arose throughout my journey with *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. These range from authenticity of text and/or libretto, vocal lines in ensembles being interchanged and stage technical matter through to the off-stage experience whilst traveling with these productions. For the purpose of the rest of this study I will focus on the authenticity of text and/or libretto and to a lesser extent the music of the work or any of the other aspects of opera production, because (as I mentioned in my introduction to this chapter) I need to ensure that the authentic messages and lessons are conveyed to the audience members. The other adjustments and challenges that are described here reside beyond the scope of my research question. They offer fruitful



avenues that remain open for further scrutiny in future studies.

Throughout this chapter I have not directly addressed my research problem. However, I do believe that a better understanding of why I am searching for an Authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, has been highlighted.

### Chapter 3: The Comparison

Through this chapter it is my aim to highlight all the weak connections between Da Ponte's original *Don Giovanni* libretto and the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto. I have used the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto as a point of departure to which I have added the comparative study. For this purpose, I made use of Nico Castel's 'International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and Translation' of *Don Giovanni* as found in *The Libretti of Mozart's Completed Operas: Vol. I*, published in 1997, as the main source to the exclusion of any other. It is for this reason that the source is not continuously cited / referenced through the course of the chapter.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, many changes have been made to the original *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, however for the purpose of this chapter, the most current version of the libretto (as it is currently being performed) is used.

To ensure comprehension regarding the layout of this chapter, it is imperative to note that the text of the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto will be found in the left-hand column. In the right-hand column, Nico Castel's translation of each scene (predominantly *recitativi*) being discussed will be presented.

Through this I aim to sketch a clear comparison between *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* and Da Ponte's original libretto with specific reference to the social issues that are lost in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto. These social issues include murder, rape, corruption and adultery, to name but a few. The columns will be interrupted by my discussion surrounding each social aspect within the scene at hand, as the social issues of this opera is one of the overarching reasons for its contemporary relevance.

Before I start my analysis, I have inserted a diagram that illustrates which number in the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, corresponds with which act and scene from Da Ponte's original libretto, to ensure a better understanding of the structure of the work as a whole. Scenes that are marked as “-” are not present in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto.

<i>Don Giovanni Alla Breve</i> Number	Da Ponte Act and Scene
0) Overture	Overture

-	Act 1, Scene 1
-	Act 1, Scene 2
-	Act 1, Scene 3
-	Act 1, Scene 4
1) Madamina, il catalogo è questo (Leporello)	Act 1, Scene 5
-	Act 1, Scene 6
2) GiovINETTE, che fate all'amore (Zerlina, Masetto, Chorus)	Act 1, Scene 7
3) Ho capito (Masetto)	Act 1, Scene 8
4) La ci darem (Don Giovanni, Zerlina)	Act 1, Scene 9
-	Act 1, Scene 10
-	Act 1, Scene 11
5) Non ti fidar (Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Don Giovanni)	Act 1, Scene 12
6) Or sai chi l'onore (Donna Anna)	Act 1, Scene 13
-	Act 1, Scene 14
7) Fin ch'han dal vino (Don Giovanni)	Act 1, Scene 15
8) Batti, batti (Zerlina)	Act 1, Scene 16
-	Act 1, Scene 17
-	Act 1, Scene 18

-	Act 1, Scene 19
-	Act 1, Scene 20
9a) Riposate, vezzose ragazze! (Don Giovanni, Leporello, Zerlina, Masetto)	Act 1, Scene 21
9b) Da bravi, via, ballate. (Leporello, Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Don Giovanni, Zerlina) 9c) Trema, trema (Leporello, Don Giovanni, Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Masetto, Zerlina)	Act 1, Scene 22
-	Act 2, Scene 1
-	Act 2, Scene 2
10) Deh! Vieni alla finestra (Don Giovanni)	Act 2, Scene 3
-	Act 2, Scene 4
-	Act 2, Scene 5
-	Act 2, Scene 6
11) Sola, sola (Donna Elvira, Leporello)	Act 2, Scene 7
11) Tergi il ciglio (Don Ottavio, Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Leporello)	Act 2, Scene 8
11) Ferma, briccone! (Zerlina, Masetto, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Donna Elvira, Leporello)	Act 2, Scene 9
12) Il mio tesoro (Don Ottavio)	Act 2, Scene 10
15*) Mi tradi quell'alma ingrata (Donna Elvira)	Act 2, Scene 11

13) Di rider finirai (Commendatore)	Act 2, Scene 12
14) O statua gentilissima (Leporello, Don Giovanni)	
-	Act 2, Scene 13
-	Act 2, Scene 14
-	Act 2, Scene 15
-	Act 2, Scene 16
16a) Don Giovanni (Commendatore, Leporello, Don Giovanni, Chorus)	Act 2, Scene 17
16b) Questo è il fin (Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Leporello, Zerlina, Masetto)	Final Scene

Table 3.1: *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* scenes vs. Da Ponte's libretto scenes.

\*Number 15 (Number 21b in Mozart's original score) is out of its original chronological order in the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. The number also features as an appendix in Mozart's original score, as the number was not composed for the premier of the work.

<b>Act 1, Scene 1 - Murder</b>	
<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Well be that as it may...</p> <p>The Commendatore is dead.</p> <p>I hope don't have to explain to you what a Commendatore is, because I haven't got a clue myself - some kind of VIP in the city council or whatever.</p> <p>In any case, that doesn't matter; he's gone from VIP to RIP.</p>	<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>To slave night and day for one who doesn't appreciate it; to endure rain and wind, to eat badly and sleep badly!</p> <p>I want to play the gentlemen, and I don't want to serve any longer, no, no!</p> <p>Oh, what a dear gentleman!</p> <p>You stay inside with the lovely lady, and I play the sentinel!</p>

<p><u><i>(This column is intentionally empty)</i></u></p>	<p>But it seems to me that there are coming people...</p> <p>I don't want them to hear me.</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b> <i>(Chasing Don Giovanni onto the scene)</i></p> <p><i>(To Don Giovanni)</i></p> <p>Unless you kill me, do not hope that I will ever allow you to escape!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>You foolish woman, you scream in vain!</p> <p>You will never learn who I am!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>What tumult!...</p> <p>Oh heaven; what screams!</p> <p>The master in new troubles!...</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>People!...</p> <p>Servants!</p> <p>At the traitor!...</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Be silent and tremble at my fury.</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Scoundrel!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Rash woman!</p>
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<p><u><i>(This column is intentionally empty)</i></u></p>	<p>This desperate Fury, wants to make me do something rash.</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Like a desperate Fury, I will know how to pursue you.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>One can see that the libertine will make me do something rash.</p> <p><b><u>Commendatore:</u></b></p> <p>Let her go, base man! Fight with me!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Go! I do not deign to fight with you.</p> <p><b><u>Commendatore:</u></b></p> <p>Thus you wish to escape from me!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>If only I could get away from here!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Wretch! Stay if you want to die</p> <p><i>(Commendatore is stabbed and falls)</i></p> <p><b><u>Commendatore:</u></b></p> <p>Ah, help!... I'm betrayed...</p> <p>The murderer... has wounded me...</p> <p>And from my throbbing breast...</p> <p>I feel... my soul leaving me...</p> <p><i>(Commendatore dies)</i></p>
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Leporello's introductory line in the original libretto is crucial to the understanding of the character as a whole throughout the opera. Through this we learn that Leporello doesn't have a great liking in his master and that he envies the life that Don Giovanni lives. He wants to be served instead of serving. Throughout the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* this information is never found in the libretto. Leporello is only understanding and supportive to the ways of Don Giovanni in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto.

Secondly, and more importantly, the dialogue of this reduction marks the murder of the Commendatore as a rather unimportant event in the plot, as the entire matter is captured in four words - "The Commendatore is dead."

By contrast, in Da Ponte's original libretto the murder scene of the Commendatore (as evident in the right hand column above) is arguably one of the most socially applicable points in the plot, as it addresses a topic that is current in contemporary South Africa – Murder. This part furthermore covers approximately twenty minutes of the original opera musically. It emphasizes the true barbaric and dangerous character that is Don Giovanni, character traits that seem to be lost in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*.

Not only is this dramatic and emotionally loaded scene being underemphasized and belittled, but the dialogue also converts it into a comical piece of the plot, considering Leporello's joking line, "he's gone from VIP to RIP." The comical element connected to the death of the Commendatore is the first major adjustment. The original dark and tragic intent of *Don Giovanni* is being dispensed with in this version. Although successfully done comically, the concept of murder can be seen as the first major social reality that gives *Don Giovanni* (and opera in general) the right to modern existence.

<b>Act 1, Scene 5 - Fidelity</b>	
<p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b></p> <p>Ja, ja Flip File. Is it my turn?</p> <p>My name is Donna Elvira and I am the one and only Mrs. Giovanni.</p>	<p><b><u>Donna Elvira:</u></b></p> <p>What can you say after a deed so black?</p> <p>You came into my house furtively.</p> <p>By dint of cunning, of oaths and of flattery, you manage to seduce my heart.</p> <p>You make me fall in love, oh cruel man!</p>



<u>(This column is intentionally empty)</u>	<p>You declare me your bride.</p> <p>And then, flaunting the holy law of earth and heaven with your enormous crime, after three days you leave Burgos.</p>
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Donna Elvira's line in the original libretto, "You (Don Giovanni) declare me your bride" is the focal point here. Through this, one can assume that she and Don Giovanni had (according to her) a serious relationship or might even have been married, however this is the only proof in the original libretto that this was indeed the case. Donna Elvira's contrasting line in the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto may be misleading to an uninformed audience member, as referring to herself as "the one and only Mrs. Giovanni," might lead the audience to believe that she is in fact married to Don Giovanni. With this said the reduced version compensates for this possible confusion with Leporello brushing it off through laughter as if to say that Donna Elvira is naive for thinking that Don Giovanni is in any way betrothed to her.

Although the connection made between Da Ponte's original libretto and the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto regarding Don Giovanni and Donna Elvira's marriage is understood, some more contextual thinking is necessary for this line to be better understood by the audience, over and above staying true to the original libretto.

<b>Act 1, Scene 8 – Attempt to murder</b>	
<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b> (applauds and approaches Masetto)</p> <p>Lovely! Yes, what a joy marriage is... Sorry, meneer. My name is Leporello. I see you are busy with your preparations.</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b> (turns around, paranoid)</p> <p>What? Where?</p>	<p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Dear friends, good day. Continue to enjoy yourselves, continue to play, oh good people.</p> <p>Is there some wedding?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Yes, sir, and I am the bride.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>I'm happy to hear that. The bridegroom?</p>

<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>May I ask what they charge you here?</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>Who? Why?!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Well, I would like to offer you a different venue which might be more fitting of your budget. (hands him a brochure)</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>What do you mean?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>A little castle, right at the seafront. Tasteful and classy. Almost for free.</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>And... why would you do that?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Pure generosity! (winks at Don Giovanni)</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b> (taking the brochure)</p> <p>A little castle? Really? Oh, how romantic!</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>Zerlina, we can't just...</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Why not? Let's just go and have a look...</p>	<p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>It is I, at your service.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Ah, good to serve me; this is true talk of a gentleman.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>It's enough that he be a husband!</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Ah, my Masetto is a man of the very best heart.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Oh, also I, as you can see!</p> <p>I wish that we be friends. Your name?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Zerlina.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>And yours?</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>Masetto.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Oh, my dear Masetto! My dear Zerlina!</p> <p>I offer you my protection.</p> <p>Leporello! What are you doing there, rascal?</p>
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<p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>But everything is almost set here.</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Well, we haven't signed any contract.</p> <p>And it's bloody expensive too!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Come have a look, no obligation. It's just around the corner.</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Masetto, please... You go with him and I'll talk to the manager of this venue in the meantime.</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>You want to get rid of me already?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Nee, dommie, I want to MARRY you, remember?!</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>But before then, you'll still get it on with the manager one last time, or what?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b> (approaches the group)</p> <p>Verskoon my, meneer – I would be glad to protect your precious bride from the advances of the manager while you are away. (kisses Zerlina's hand)</p>	<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Also I, dear master, am offering my protection.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Quickly go with them to my Villa.</p> <p>Lead them immediately.</p> <p>Give orders that they should have chocolate, coffee, wines, hams.</p> <p>Try to amuse everyone.</p> <p>Show them the garden, the gallery, the bedrooms; in fact, see that Masetto is kept happy. Do you understand me?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I understand.</p> <p>Let's go.</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>Sir...</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>What is it?</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>Zerlina cannot stay without me.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>In your place there will be his excellency, and he will know how to take your place.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Oh! Zerlina is in the hands of a cavalier.</p> <p>Just go; shortly she will come with me.</p>
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<p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Oh, that is really kind of you.</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>You? And who are you again?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>This is the generous patron who is putting his residence at your disposal.</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>Ah, now I get it! He wants to protect her from the manager, but who will protect her from him?</p>	<p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Go, don't fear; I am in the hands of a cavalier.</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>And so?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>And so? There is no reason for suspicion...</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>And I, by God!...</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p><i>(Showing Masetto his musket)</i></p> <p>Oh, let us end this argument;</p> <p>If you do not leave immediately without any other objections, Masetto, look out, you will be sorry.</p>
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In this part of the reduced version the dialogue holds no resemblance to Da Ponte's original libretto. There are four main discrepancies that need to be discussed.

It might have been noticeable that in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, Leporello drives the conversation with Masetto and Zerlina contrasting to Don Giovanni taking charge of the conversation in Da Ponte's original libretto. Although this might not be the focal point of the argument, this results in noticeable character traits of Don Giovanni being lost in the current reduction.

The first such character trait comes from Don Giovanni's order to Leporello. Through him commanding Leporello to "see that Masetto is kept happy," arguably allows time for him to be amused by Zerlina's presence alone. The fact that Don Giovanni finds reasoning within himself to trick a newlywed husband and wife through such cunning ways to ensure time alone with the bride (Zerlina), communicates Don Giovanni to be a rather sly and two-faced character.

The second lies within the use of the word “cavalier”. Don Giovanni in this scene sells his cavalier-ness as a noble position that is characterised by truth and loyalty while knowing the opposite is true to him specifically. He manages to win over Zerlina’s trust by merely referring to himself as a cavalier, allowing him to win time with her alone. Here we find the second major social challenge of contemporary South Africa that corresponds with the plot of *Don Giovanni*. People in power positions, misusing titles to gain personal triumph, rather than using it to the better of the community and its people.

Thirdly, this scene sees Don Giovanni willing to threaten a man with death on his wedding day because he feels it necessary to engage in a sexual encounter with this man’s bride (Zerlina). Earlier in this chapter the social challenges surrounding murder have been mentioned, however an even greater social issue in the contemporary South Africa is the reality of “attempt to murder”. Attempting to murder one human being because his/her opinions differ to that of the other is an ever growing notion, especially within the South African political sphere.

These social issues are currently being dispensed with in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, as the level of abnormality and obsession in this scene seems to be lost to comical elements. Da Ponte made it clear that a very serious situation was busy unfolding and because of this, and the fact that Masetto is being threatened with death, Masetto bursts out into his aria. This level of seriousness is being portrayed light-heartedly through the use of comedy.

<b>Act 1, Scene 9 - Fidelity</b>	
<p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Snaakse kêrel...</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Ja, he’s a sweetheart.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Is he always that jealous?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Oh yes, and sometimes he acts like a little child.</p>	<p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>At last we are freed! What do you say, my dearest, didn’t I handle it neatly?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Sir, he is my husband...</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Who! Him? Do you think an honest man, a noble cavalier as I pride myself to be, could suffer that your little face of gold, should be</p>

<p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>And you want to marry someone like that?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>HE wants to. For me it doesn't really matter.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Do you find him that attractive?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>He is sweet.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Sweet?!</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>I love him.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>That wasn't my question. I asked if you find him ATTRACTIVE.</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Well, what is attractive, really?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Yes, what is REALLY attractive to you?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>I haven't thought about it like that.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>And you expect me to believe you?</p>	<p>ill-treated by a base ploughman like Masetto?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina</u></b></p> <p>But sir, I gave him my word to marry him.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni</u></b></p> <p>Such a promise is worth nothing.</p> <p>You aren't made to be a peasant.</p> <p>Another fate will be procured for you by those roguish eyes, those lips so lovely, those little fingers white and perfumed: it feels as is I am touching buttermilk and smelling roses.</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Ah!... I wouldn't want...</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>What wouldn't you want?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>To be left deceived in the end.</p> <p>I know that you cavaliers are rarely honest and sincere with women.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>It's a common people's deception.</p> <p>You can tell a noble person's honesty by his eyes.</p> <p>Come let us not lose time;</p> <p>In this instant I want to marry you.</p>
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<p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Well, there's never been anyone to compare him to, to be honest.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Maybe I could help you with that – the comparison.</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Huh? How?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Just to be sure...</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>What? What do you mean?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Is it that hard to understand?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>I don't-</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Come to my Villa...</p>	<p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>You!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Certainly, I. That little house is mine:</p> <p>We will be alone, and there, my jewel, we will get married.</p>
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The dialogue above, yet again, bears no resemblance to the original libretto in any way and brings the original level of seriousness and concern, that Zerlina is feeling at this point, down through the employment of comedy.

The first major concern rests within Zerlina's perception of Masetto.

In the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, Zerlina seems to think of Masetto as jealous, childish and unattractive. Although there are moments in Da Ponte's original libretto that might insinuate Zerlina feeling this way, there is no proof from Zerlina herself that leads us to believe that this could be true and certainly not in this specific scene. Contrasting to these views, Zerlina seems to want to stay true to Masetto, through her line "but sir, I gave him my word to marry him," irrespective of whether she wants to give in to Don Giovanni's charm or

not. Her contemplation on whether she is considering giving Don Giovanni what he wants, becomes evident through her line “To be left deceived in the end. I know that you cavaliers are rarely honest and sincere with women.” This brings the question of Zerlina’s intentions to life. Did she want to be alone with Don Giovanni? Is this why she encouraged Masetto to leave with Leporello? Considering the events that pan out in the duet “La ci darem”, she does indeed give in to Don Giovanni’s cunning ways in the 6/8 section of the duet singing, “andiam, andiam mio bene”.

In this piece of dialogue, the third social matter that needs to be mentioned becomes apparent. This can be found in Don Giovanni’s line, “such a promise is worth nothing”.

Being a social challenge on a much larger, even universal scale, the concept of fidelity in relationship and the anthropological questions surrounding the notion of being betrothed to another human being is as applicable in a South African context as any other. Once again this scene dispenses with these social and moral challenges that need to be rectified and furthermore the true characterisation of Zerlina is lost through the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto’s continuous search for comedy.

<b>Act 1, Scene 11 – Two - faced friendship</b>	
<p><b><u>Anna:</u></b> (who had entered a moment ago with Ottavio)</p> <p>Excuse me, that’s mine... (takes the coat)</p> <p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b> (pulling Giovanni to herself)</p> <p>And this is MINE!</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Anna, my angel, let’s go. I don’t like it here.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Me neither. Maybe we should all leave.</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Don’t I know you from somewhere?</p>	<p><b><u>Don Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>My beloved, now that tears are useless, let us talk of vengeance... Ah, Don Giovanni!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Really, this is all I need!</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>We’ve met up with you at an opportune moment, have you a heart, have you a generous soul?</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>One can see that the devil has told her something.</p> <p>What a question! Why?</p>



<p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b> (to Audience)</p> <p>You see... Number one thousand and five!</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>What now?</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>I don't know... you remind me of someone...</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b> (To Anna)</p> <p>Who? Me? You're crazy</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>We shouldn't have come here in the first place.</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Do you think I can just stay at home the whole time? In a house where a man, my father, has been murdered?</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>My love maybe we should be planning your father's funeral. What do you think?</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>I need a drink!</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b> (going towards the bar)</p> <p>A double scotch for this lady!</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Wait a second...!</p>	<p><b><u>Don Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>We have need of your friendship.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni</u></b></p> <p>I can breathe again! Command me... my relatives, my kin, this hand, this sword, my goods, my blood I will expend to serve you.</p> <p>But you, lovely Donna Anna, why thus do you weep?</p> <p>Who was the cruel man who dared disturb the calm of your life...?</p>
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<p><b><u>Anna:</u></b> (to Ottavio)</p> <p>You see! That's how a man does it!</p> <p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b> (to Zerlina)</p> <p>You see? That's how HE does it.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>If I could be of any further assistance...</p> <p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b> (interrupting)</p> <p>Further assistance!! Wragtig! Don't believe a word he says!</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Come on, I just wanted to...</p>	<p><b><u>(This column is intentionally empty)</u></b></p>
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The fourth socially related topic in question, is brought forward by Don Ottavio's line, "we have need of your friendship". The social issue at hand surrounds people in need looking for comfort from their friends who actually have alternative motives for supplying his/her friendship. Here it is evident that although Donna Anna and Don Ottavio are in desperate need of the friendship and help of Don Giovanni, he only grants them this friendship with alternative motives so that they won't suspect him of being the murderer to Donna Anna's father. The social challenge of two-facedness is as applicable today as it was in Mozart and Da Ponte's time and sketches a clear image of the cunning character that is Don Giovanni, something that is lost in the current reduction.

With this considered, it is evident that the information given in the reduced scene above bares a pittance of resemblance to the original and that once again the main drive of the reduction was based on the continues search for comical elements rather than an authentic story line.

<b>Act 1, Scene 13 - Rape</b>	
<p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b> (shakes his head)</p> <p>What kind of bitch-fight was that?!</p>	<p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Don Ottavio, I'm dead!</p>

<p><b><u>Anna:</u></b> (lost in her own thoughts)</p> <p>I don't understand...</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Yes, the crowd used to be much better here.</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Ottavio, that's HIM!!!</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Who's what?</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>The murderer!!!</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>The one with whom you slept...?</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>How many times must I say it – I didn't sleep with him!</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>What then?</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>I was forced!</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>To do what?</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Nothing!</p>	<p><b><u>Don Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>What has happened?</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>For pity's sake, help me!</p> <p><b><u>Don Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>My beloved, take courage.</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Oh gods! He is the murdered of my father...</p> <p><b><u>Don Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>What are you saying?</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Do not doubt any longer.</p> <p>Those last words that the wicked man uttered, everything about his voice recalled in my heart the worthless man who in my apartment...</p> <p><b><u>Don Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Oh heaven!</p> <p>Could it be possible that under the sacred mantle of friendship...</p> <p>But how did it happen, relate to me the strange event.</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>It was already somewhat late at night, when in my rooms I found myself alone to my misfortune, I saw enter wrapped in a cloak a man who at first moment I had mistaken for</p>
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<p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>...And your father was supposed to believe that?</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Because YOU weren't man enough!</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>I wasn't THERE!</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>So?</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>So what?</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Ottavio, do you want to sit here and chat / drink tea all day, or do something about it?</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Do what?</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Show that there is a man inside you!</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Here?! Right now?!</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>We must find this... Giovanni!</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Without proof?</p>	<p>you; but then I realized that I was mistaken...</p> <p><b><u>Don Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Stars! Continue.</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>He silently approaches me and want to embrace me; I try to free myself but he grasps me tighter; I scream.</p> <p>No one comes.</p> <p>With one hand he tries to stifle my voice, and with the other he seizes me tightly thus, that already I believe myself overcome.</p> <p><b><u>Don Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Perfidious man!... and finally?...</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>At last the sorrow, the horror of the infamous attack increased my energy so that, by dint of disengaging myself, twisting myself and bending myself, I freed myself from him.</p> <p><b><u>Don Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Ah me! I breathe again!</p> <p><b><u>Donna Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Then I redouble my screams, I call for help, flees the felon.</p> <p>Boldly I follow him eve into the street to stop him, and I become a pursuer instead of the pursued one:</p>
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<p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>My anger is proof enough!</p>	<p>My father runs out, he wants to identify him, and the wicked man, who was stronger than my poor old father, completes his horrendous misdeed by killing him.</p>
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The scene above in the *Alla Breve* version provides the audience members with the wrong impression of Donna Anna and Don Ottavio's relationship. The relation between these two characters are not as distant and uninterested as in the scenario as is presented here. The reference made to Don Ottavio that must "show that there is a man inside" him, is inserted here to underline the fact that Don Ottavio is often seen as a weak character who is incapable of keeping his betrothed safe. The reference made to "Here?! Right now?!" also feeds on this stereotype of modern staging concept that doesn't see Don Ottavio to be the most intelligent character.

Secondly, the reference made to "rape" in Donna Anna's line above "I was forced", always seems to be a point of interest and is usually open for interpretation amongst musicologists, performers and staging directors. The only information that Da Ponte supplies us with is Leporello's line in act one, scene two of the original libretto where he says, "Bravo! Two charming enterprises! To violate the daughter and kill the father." Exactly what is meant with "violate" is the main concern here. There is no proof in the opera that Don Giovanni ever raped Donna Anna, but given the nature of his character (an understanding of his character was gained from performing the role), this is usually a very common assumption that is made by audience members, conductors and stage directors. With this said, Leporello's line in the opening dialogue of the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, "and she probably doesn't either..." opens a different side of the debate regarding the issue surrounding Donna Anna's rape. Although there is no reference in the original libretto that Donna Anna desired sexual engagement with Don Giovanni, the question arises whether the story that she relays to Don Ottavio in scene thirteen, on exactly what happened on the night of the **so called** rape, is believable or not. Whether this story is what actually happened or whether it was only a retelling that was constructed on the spot to save her from any quarrels that she might face with Don Ottavio, is a question that many stage directors and conductors spend much time answering whilst studying this libretto. The answer to this question might be hidden within the tale of the

original *Don Juan*, upon which *Don Giovanni* was based. This topic will enjoy further scrutiny later in the thesis in an attempt to understand the situation through the lens of musicology.

This scene is presented in the original opera as a *recitativo accompagnato* (Accompanied recitative). As will become evident later in this thesis, the use of an accompanied recitative in a reduction such as this is a crucial part of the reduction process because of the large amounts of information it offers to further the plot. With this said, however, one can understand that the *recitativo* cannot be used in its entirety, as without surtitles, there are large amounts of Italian that the audience might or might not be able to comprehend. Although this is understood, one cannot simply deprive the audience from this crucial information. This will need to be investigated and corrected further on within the study.

<b>Act 1, Scene 15 – Donna Elvira</b>	
<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Hier kom ‘n ding! (to Giovanni) There you are. I’m glad you managed on your own, I’ve been busy the whole time: first, calming Masetto down with some shooters, and then preparing your big party. (to himself loudly) Yes, that’s my boss – after a day like this, he still hasn’t had enough. There must always be a party!</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Leporello...there is something in the air...</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Tell me about it...!</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>I’ve got my fingers in all sorts of pies!</p>	<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I must, on any terms, forever abandon this fine lunatic...</p> <p>There he is: Look with what indifference he is coming here!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Oh my Leporello, all is going well!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>My Don Giovanni, all is going badly!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>How goes all badly?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I go home, as you ordered, with all those people.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Bravo!</p>

<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b> (taking out the notebook)</p> <p>Who should I put down?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Just make notes, without any commitment: First of all, the lovely Zerlina – Oh, I'll have dinner with the devil before I let that girl go down the aisle!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Don't tempt the devil... (writes) Zerlina with a T or an D?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>(showing her breast size in the air) With an D, a double D, a CAPITAL Double S!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Ok, we get it! And where is she now?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>I don't know, at least we can have some peace and quiet for a while... And I am confident that I can get that Voluptuous Anna in the sack as well...</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b> (sighs)</p> <p>I thought we had ticked that one off already?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>And there's still Elvira... This obsession makes her kind of sexy again.</p>	<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>By dint of chatter, of endearments and of lies, which I have learned so well by being with you, I try to keep them amused...</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Bravo!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I say a thousand things to Masetto to placate him, to get his mind off his jealousy...</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Well done, by my conscience!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I make that the men and women drink; they're already half drunk.</p> <p>Some sing, some joke, some continue to drink...</p> <p>At the height if it all, who do you think arrives?</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Zerlina!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Bravo! And who came with her?</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Donna Elvira!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Bravo! And what did she say about you?</p>
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<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>But she has been very clearly ticked off! A repeat would be completely against your principles.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Principles and rules Me?! (Laughter) Everything in order for tonight? We need wine! Lots and lots of wine!</p>	<p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Everything bad about me that came into her mouth?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Bravo, by my conscience!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>And what did you do?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I kept silent.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>And she?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>She continued to scream.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>And you?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>When it seemed to me that already she had gotten it off her chest, gently I drew her out of the garden and with fine cunning I locked the door with the key and escaped. I left her quite alone on the street.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Bravo! Well done! Triple well done! The affair cannot go better.</p> <p>You began it, I will know how to finish it.</p>
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<u>(This column is intentionally empty)</u>	These country girls are weighing too much on my mind. I want to amuse them until night comes.
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It is true that Don Giovanni and Leporello enter the scene to engage in a discussion, however in contrast to what is presented in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, Da Ponte's original libretto tells us an ample amount on the character of Donna Elvira.

Through the retelling of the happenings by Leporello (not only in the preceding scene, but through the opera as a whole), it becomes apparent that Donna Elvira possesses a rather annoying, stalking personality type, who idealises Don Giovanni and who wants to be in a relationship with him at any cost.

This point in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* could possibly be suitable to bring these character traits of Donna Elvira to the foreground which are currently lost in the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto.

<b>Act 1, Scene 17 - Jealousy</b>	
<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b> (entering with Giovanni)</p> <p>My friends, may I ask you to move in, the party is about to start.</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>Party?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>For some of us it has been a tough day... We sometimes like to have a quiet moment before things really get going.</p>	<p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>Just look how this witch was able to seduce me! We are really the weak ones in the head!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Let all be prepared for a grand celebration.</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Ah, Masetto, listen to the voice of "monsieur" cavalier!</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p>Well, what of it?</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>He will come.</p>

(This column is intentionally empty)

**Masetto:**

Let him come.

**Zerlina:**

Ah! If only I could find a place to hide!

**Masetto:**

What do you fear?

Why are you becoming so pale?

Ah! I understand you little rascal!

You are afraid I might understand how the business between you two went!

Quickly before he comes, I want to get myself off to one side.

Here is a niche... I will stay hidden here.

**Zerlina:**

Listen... where are you going?

Ah, don't hide oh Masetto!

If he finds you, poor boy! – You don't know what he can do.

**Masetto:**

Let him do/say what he wants.

**Zerlina:**

Ah, words are of no use, what a whim he has in his head!

That ungrateful man, that cruel man wants to do something rash today.

**Masetto:**

Speak up and stay here!

<u><i>(This column is intentionally empty)</i></u>	I'll find out if she is faithful to me and how the matter went between her and Giovanni.
<b>Act 1, Scene 19 - Jealousy</b>	
<u><i>(This column is intentionally empty)</i></u>	<p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Hidden among these trees, maybe he won't see me.</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>My lovely Zerlina, I have already seen you, don't run away.</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>Ah! Let me go away...</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>No, no stay, my joy!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p><i>(surprised)</i></p> <p>Masetto?!</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b></p> <p><i>(Aggressive)</i></p> <p>Yes, it's me... Masetto <i>(Recreating Don Giovanni's voice)</i>!</p> <p><b><u>Don Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Why are you hiding there? Your beautiful Zerlina, cannot be without you much longer! <i>(Bringing her closer to Masetto)</i></p> <p>Will you care to join me inside for the party? Let's go dance with the others.</p>

At this point in the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, it might seem that Masetto and Zerlina are now back on safe ground and that the situation between them has been rectified after Masetto's jealousy becomes well known in the scene and aria of Zerlina's "Batti, batti o bel Masetto" earlier in the act. This combined with the absence of any reference to Masetto's "You are afraid I might understand how the business between you two went!" in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, creates the perception that they are no longer quarrelling. However, in comparison to Da Ponte's original libretto this is not the case.

It becomes apparent that Masetto's jealousy (which now justifies Zerlina calling him a jealous character in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto earlier in this chapter) turns the situation for the worst. Furthermore, the two-faced character that is Don Giovanni is once again brought to the foreground considering his final line above, "Your beautiful Zerlina cannot be without you much longer", knowing that he would rather be alone with Zerlina to add her name to his list.

<b>Act 2, Scene 1 - Bribery</b>	
<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Now, seriously, my nerves are shattered. What is the half-time score then? Still no new entry to the list, and instead we have one dead old man and five new enemies!</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b> (joins him)</p> <p>Four. Zerlina doesn't count. I will have her...</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Shouldn't we go out of the country for a while? There's plenty of fish in the sea.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>I am not going anywhere else until I'm finished fishing here.</p>	<p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Come on buffoon, don't annoy me.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>No, no, master, I don't want to stay.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Listen to me, friend...</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I want to leave, I tell you.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>But what did I do to you, that you want to leave me?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Oh, nothing at all. You almost killed me.</p>

<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Eish, this is how he is – Insatiable and at the same time finicky!</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Zerlina is such a lovely girl and that Masetto is a jealous brute. I will woo her with something she simply cannot resist...</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Wat nou?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>A serenade under her balcony...</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Well, ok then. So what must I do?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Keep that bunny-boiler Elvira off my back.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Me? But it's YOU she's obsessed with.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>And we'll use that in our favour. From now on you are me. (gives him his clothes) Give me your clothes.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>No one is going to fall for this.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Really? Let's put that to the test then shall we? (Goes down into the audience</p>	<p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Go on but you're crazy, it was in jest.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>And I am not jesting, but I want to leave.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Leporello.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Sir.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Come here, let's make peace. Take this...</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>What?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Four doubloons.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Oh! Listen: For this time the ceremony I agree to; but don't accustom yourself to it; don't think to seduce someone like myself as you do with women, by means of money.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Let's not talk anymore about that. Do you have the courage to do what I tell you?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>As long as we forget about women.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Leave the women? Madman! You know they for me are necessary more than the</p>
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<p>and brings a lady onto stage) Women in love will fall for anything.</p>	<p>bread that I eat, more than the air that I breathe!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>And you have the heart to deceive them all?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>It's all love. Whoever is faithful to one woman alone, is cruel to the other women.</p> <p>I, who in myself feel such expansive feeling, love all of them.</p> <p>Therefore, women, who are unable to reason, call my natural goodness, deceit.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I have never seen a greater or kinder goodness.</p> <p>Now then what do you want?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Listen. Did you see the chambermaid of Donna Elvira?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I, no.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>You haven't seen such a thing of beauty, my dear Leporello.</p> <p>Now I want to try my luck with her and I thought, since it's already evening, to better whet her appetite, to present myself in your clothes.</p>
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<u>(This column is intentionally empty)</u>	<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>And why couldn't you present yourself in yours?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Aristocratic clothing has little credit with people of her class.</p> <p>Hurry, come on!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Sir, for more than one reason...</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Stop it! I won't suffer opposition.</p> <p><i>(They exchange cloaks and hats)</i></p>
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There are many crucial plot points and character traits of Leporello and Don Giovanni that are lost in this scene of the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto.

Firstly, it becomes apparent in Da Ponte's original libretto that Leporello has the fullest intention of leaving Don Giovanni, because he has had enough of Don Giovanni's cunning ways. Although this is lost in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, it is in the manner in which Don Giovanni manages to get Leporello to stay that foregrounds the fifth social issue at hand – bribery. Being a pervasive reality in contemporary South Africa, it is important to note here that the only reason Leporello stays is because Don Giovanni paid him to do so – bribery and corruption.

Secondly, we learn in Da Ponte's original libretto that the woman for whom his serenade is intended is the chambermaid to Donna Elvira. This crucial information is missing from the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto.

Lastly, the cunning personality of Don Giovanni is made clear by his idea of switching clothes with Leporello to be able to win over the chambermaid's attention. He does this because, "Aristocratic clothing has little credit with people of her class."

## Act 2, Scene 12 – Misuse of power

**Giovanni:**

Hahaha! That was fun! You should have seen his face! “There’s going to be some ass-kicking” – “Whose ass?” and BANG! – Hahahaha!

**Leporello:** (visibly uncomfortable)

Huh, just a question: Why did I have to come and meet you in the cemetery?

**Anna, Elvira, Zerlina, Ottavio:**

(Makes scary and graveyard noises)

**Leporello:**

Shht! It’s a quiet cemetery!

**Giovanni:**

There’s always a first for everything.

**Leporello:**

Can we at least speak a bit softer...?

**Giovanni:**

Why? There’s no one else here besides us.

**Leporello:**

Are you sure?

**Giovanni:** (calling in the direction of the statue)

Hello! Is anybody home?

**Giovanni:**

Ah, Ah, Ah! That’s a good one! Now let her search! What lovely night! It is brighter than day; it seems made to wonder about hunting for girls. Is it late? Oh, it isn’t yet two o’clock in the morning yet. I’d like to know how the matter between Leporello and Donna Elvira finished, if he was careful...

**Leporello:**

Lastly he wants me to come to ruin.

**Giovanni:**

It’s him! Oh, Leporello!

**Leporello:**

Who is calling me?

**Giovanni:**

Don’t you know your master?

**Leporello:**

If only I didn’t know him!

**Giovanni:**

How so? Rascal?

**Leporello:**

Ah, it is you? Excuse me!

**Giovanni:**

What has happened?



<p><u><i>(This column is intentionally empty)</i></u></p>	<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Because of you I was almost beaten to death.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Well wasn't this an honour for you?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Sir, you can have that honour.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Go on, go on; come here. What lovely things I have to tell you!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>But what are you doing here?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Come inside and you will know what. Several little stories that happened to me since you left, I will tell you another time.</p> <p>Now I want to tell you the most beautiful one of them.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>One about women, of course.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Is there any doubt?</p> <p>I met a young, fetching girl on the street. I go towards her; I take her by the hand; she wants to flee from me; I say a few words; she takes me... do you know for whom?</p>
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<p><u><i>(This column is intentionally empty)</i></u></p>	<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I don't know.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>For you.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Very well.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>By the hand she now takes me.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Even better.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>She caresses me, she embraces me.</p> <p>"Dear my Leporello... Leporello my dear..."</p> <p>Then I realized that she was some lovely thing of yours.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Oh curse him!</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Of the deception I take advantage; I don't know how she recognizes me: She screams.</p> <p>I hear people; I set about to escape, and very quickly I climb into this place, over that wall.</p>
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<u>(This column is intentionally empty)</u>	<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>And you tell me the matter with such indifference?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Why not?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>But what if that woman had been my wife?</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Better yet!</p>
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In this section, there are two character traits of Don Giovanni that arise, one of which becomes the sixth social challenge in contemporary South Africa that seems to be misrepresented in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto.

Firstly, the cunning nature of the character that is Don Giovanni is foregrounded through the line of Don Giovanni's, "Well wasn't this an honour for you?" Here we see how much Don Giovanni actually thinks of himself in comparison to other characters. So much in fact, that he thinks it to be an honour for people to die because of his crafty ways.

The second and sixth social issue at hand is found in Leporello's line, "But what if that woman had been my wife?" One is naturally inclined to believe, considering Don Giovanni's sly ways, that he might in fact have some degree of respect for Leporello, reflecting on everything Leporello has done for him throughout the course of the plot. Da Ponte's original libretto proves the opposite to be true. Don Giovanni would have taken advantage of this woman who potentially could have been the wife of the only loyal man he knows – Leporello.

People and leaders in a position of power who take advantage of the wives of their co-workers and employees, is an integral part of the social reality we face in contemporary South Africa. This unfortunately is lost in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto.

## Act 2, Scene 14 – 16 – Donna Elvira

### Leporello:

Same procedure as last night, Mr  
Giovanni?

### Giovanni:

Same procedure as EVERY night,  
Leporello. But without any guests. I've  
had it. Tonight I don't want any hide and  
seek games and also no preaching from  
oversensitive and undersexed ladies.  
(Gestures to audience) Sorry.

### Leporello:

And if... I mean... what if HE shows  
up?!

### Giovanni:

The Commendatore? Dan gat die poppe  
dans!

### Leporello:

Who knows what an angry living-dead  
can do...?

### Giovanni:

And what do you think he will do?! Pick  
me up and drag me down to Hell with  
him?

### Leporello:

...for example.

### Giovanni:

Already the dinner table is prepared.

You (Musicians) play, dear friends.

Since I am spending my money, I want to  
amuse myself.

Leporello, serve me, quickly!

### Leporello:

I am most ready to serve.

Bravi! "*Cosa rara*"!

### Giovanni:

What do you think of the lovely concert?

### Leporello:

It is a concert worthy of you.

### Giovanni:

Ah, what a tasty dish!

### Leporello:

Ah, what a barbarous appetite!

What mouthfuls of a giant!

I am about to faint.

### Giovanni:

In seeing my mouthfuls, he's about to faint.

Bring the next dish.

### Leporello:

Your servant.

Long live *I Litiganti*.

<p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>We'll cross that bridge when we get there. Soos altyd.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Very well. Soos altyd. (someone knocks at the door)</p>	<p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Pour the wine.</p> <p>Excellent Marzimino.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>This piece of pheasant I'm going to swallow quietly.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>That lout is eating: I'll pretend not to notice what he's doing.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I know this tune all too well.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Leporello!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>My master...</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Speak clearly, rascal.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>A cold is preventing me from uttering my words.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>While I eat whistle for a bit.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I don't know how to do it.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>What?</p>
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<p><u><i>(This column is intentionally empty)</i></u></p>	<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Excuse me, sir, but your cook is so excellent that I too wanted to taste his food.</p> <p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b></p> <p>I want to make the ultimate test of my love for you.</p> <p>No longer will I remember your deceits; I feel pity...</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni, Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>What?</p> <p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b></p> <p>My oppressed soul doesn't ask you for any reward for her loyalty.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>I am amazed! What do you want? If you don't rise, I won't remain standing.</p> <p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b></p> <p>Ah, do not mock my anguish.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>That girl almost brings me to tears.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>I mock you? Heavens! Why? What do you want my love?</p>
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(This column is intentionally empty)

**Elvira:**

For you to change my life.

**Giovanni:**

Brava!

**Elvira:**

You evil-hearted man!

**Giovanni:**

Let me eat, and if you like, eat with me.

**Elvira:**

Stay, you cruel man, as an example of iniquity in your filthy stench.

**Leporello:**

If he is not moved by her grief, he either has a heart of stone or no heart at all.

**Giovanni:**

Long live the women! Long live the good wine! Sustenance and glory of humanity!

**Elvira:**

Ah!

**Giovanni, Leporello:**

What scream is this?

**Giovanni:**

Go see what has happened...

**Leporello:**

Ah!

<p><u><i>(This column is intentionally empty)</i></u></p>	<p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>What diabolical scream!</p> <p>Leporello, what is it?</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Ah... sir... for pity's sake...</p> <p>Don't go out... of here...</p> <p>The man... of... stone... the man... white...</p> <p>Ah, master... I'm freezing... I'm fainting...</p> <p>If you saw... what a figure...</p> <p>If you heard how he walks;</p> <p>Ta... Ta...</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>I don't understand anything at all.</p> <p>You are truly insane.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Ah! Listen!</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Someone is knocking. Open.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I am trembling.</p> <p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Open, I say.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Ah!</p>
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<u>(This column is intentionally empty)</u>	<p><b><u>Giovanni:</u></b></p> <p>Madman! To get myself out of this tangle, I will go open myself.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I don't want to anymore see my friend;</p> <p>Quietly, very quietly I will hide myself.</p>
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The culture of the art festival within South Africa is one of the main supporting mechanisms behind the success of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* (for reasons as discussed in chapter two in this thesis). Through the line above, “same procedure as last night...,” a quote is made from the famous 1963 film and stage drama *Dinner for One*, a favourite theatrical work at South African art festivals<sup>5</sup>. The connection to this piece might have been inserted into the text, because of the (once again comical) level of interrelatedness the audience would have experienced.

In the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto extract above, it becomes apparent that Don Giovanni's line, “...no preaching from oversensitive and undersexed ladies...” sums up a large part of Da Ponte's original scene, namely the entrance of Donna Elvira. Although not a socially significant scene, we do learn that the character of Donna Elvira does indeed have feelings for Don Giovanni that run deeper than one might anticipate. After everything that happened between her and Don Giovanni through the course of the plot, she still finds it within herself to try and test her love for Don Giovanni one last time. This is a character trait of Donna Elvira one doesn't seem to find within the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto.

<b>Final Scene</b>	
<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Let's just finish this!</p>	<p><b><u>All:</u></b></p> <p>Ah! Where is the wicked man?</p> <p>Where is the worthless one?</p>

<sup>5</sup> Being such a favorite under the South African art festivals, Nico Luwes, translated the work into Afrikaans and called it *Maaltyd vir een*. A few performances of this work were recorded in *Claerhout Festival*, *Excelsior* (2007), *KKNK*, *Oudtshoorn* (2008) and *Aardklop* (2008) (Heydenrych, n.d: 5).

<p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b></p> <p>Ja, the bastard got what he deserved!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>I need to find a new job!</p> <p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b></p> <p>Oh! I'm alone!</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina:</u></b> (To Masetto)</p> <p>I need more.</p> <p><b><u>Masetto:</u></b> (To Zerlina)</p> <p>I've been giving you more.</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b> (To Anna)</p> <p>Can we plan the funeral now?</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b> (Slapping Ottavio)</p> <p>Are you still here?</p> <p><b><u>Anna and Elvira:</u></b> (Looking at each other)</p> <p>MEN!</p>	<p>I wish to vent all my anger.</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Only watching him tied in chains will calm my grief.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Do not hope any further to find him again...</p> <p>Do not search any longer... He went very far.</p> <p><b><u>All:</u></b></p> <p>What is it? Speak!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>There came a colossus...</p> <p><b><u>All:</u></b></p> <p>Come on, quickly, hurry!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>But if I can't...</p> <p><b><u>All:</u></b></p> <p>Quickly! Speak! Hurry!</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Through smoke and fire... heed a little...</p> <p>The man of stone... stop where you are...</p> <p>Right there below... he struck the great blow...</p> <p>Right there the devil gulped him down.</p> <p><b><u>All:</u></b></p> <p>Stars! What do I hear!</p>
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<p><u><i>(This column is intentionally empty)</i></u></p>	<p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>True is the occurrence.</p> <p><b><u>All:</u></b></p> <p>Ah, it must have been the ghost he met out there.</p> <p><b><u>Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>Now that all of us, my treasure, are avenged by heaven, give me the reward of finally letting me marry you. Do not make me languish any longer.</p> <p><b><u>Anna:</u></b></p> <p>Allow, oh dearest, a year still for the relief of my heart.</p> <p><b><u>Anna, Ottavio:</u></b></p> <p>To the desire of who adores me (you), must yield a faithful love.</p> <p><b><u>Elvira:</u></b></p> <p>I am going into a convent to end my life!</p> <p><b><u>Masetto, Zerlina:</u></b></p> <p>We, Zerlina (Masetto) will go home to dine together.</p> <p><b><u>Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>And I am going to the inn to find a better master.</p> <p><b><u>Zerlina, Masetto, Leporello:</u></b></p> <p>Let him stay then, that rogue with Proserpine and Pluto; And we all, oh good people, let's repeat gaily the very old song:</p>
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For the first time we find the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto to be a bit more comprehensive than in previous scenes as parallels do exist between it and Da Ponte's original libretto in this scene.

Firstly, Donna Elvira and Leporello have true representations of their current state of existence in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto in comparison to Da Ponte's original libretto. Secondly, however, the relationship between Zerlina and Masetto is portrayed incorrectly. In the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, the young married couple seems to still not have straightened out their points of discomfort that they experienced earlier in the opera. On the contrary, however, Da Ponte's original libretto doesn't give us any indication that this is in fact the case, but the couple seems to be rather eager to go home and start their lives together.

Lastly, the relationship between Donna Anna and Don Ottavio seems to be portrayed truthfully to a certain extent in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto. With this said, although Donna Anna might have the internal intention of slapping Don Ottavio on his marriage proposal, she chooses to be much more discreet about this in Da Ponte's original libretto. Considering the level of social freedom that women have today in comparison to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Donna Anna slapping Don Ottavio might be the way in which the situation would present itself today.

### **Sub – Conclusion**

As evidenced from the preceding chapter, it becomes clear that the dominant social issues within Da Ponte's original *Don Giovanni* libretto has been disposed with in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto. However, these social issues are the driving force that grants *Don Giovanni* the social relevance it has in our contemporary society. It is for this reason that I will now be reviewing the literature surrounding authenticity – not only in music, but in libretti as well, in an attempt to return *Don Giovanni's* social relevance to *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*.

## ***Chapter 4: Literature - Review or Rethink***

“The human race has been in a content state of cultural decline, a state that HIPP has the potential to rectify.” - J. Butt

### **Context**

If one seeks to find a definition of the term, one finds that “authenticity” describes the quality of something being authentic or genuine (Harper, 2001). For this to ring true one needs to understand the definition of the word “authentic”. Today this term relates to, “undisputed origin or authorship”, “accurate in representation of facts” or to be “duly executed” (Collins English Dictionary, 2012).<sup>6</sup>

There are many scholars in different anthropologically related fields that each focus on a different one of the three definitions that are listed above. One such a scholar, who gives specific attention to “undisputed origin or authorship” is Richard Handler.

In Handler’s article on authenticity he argues that authenticity can be broken down into various subcategories if one analyses “authenticity” as a cultural phenomenon relating to the contemporary western sphere. He suggests that because authenticity is a cultural occurrence, the term “authenticity” could be tied to other aspects of the modern Western culture such as “individualism”. These two terms (“authenticity” and “individualism”) are held together by, what he calls, the “larger consumer culture” or economically speaking, “mega-trends”.

Handler suggests that the surrounding consumer culture links itself to the individual resulting in an authentic existence of tangible objects. An example of this (as Handler described in his address to the annual American Anthropological Association in Washington D.C.) is the

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<sup>6</sup> Etymologically, the word “authenticity”, derived from the root word “authentic”, has been traced back to between four-thousand-five-hundred years and two-thousand-five-hundred years before Christ (Powell, 2013), where the word “sene” was extracted from the Prouto-Indo-European (PIE) linguistic structure (Powell, 2013). This structure is seen as the mother tongue from which all Indo-European languages have descended from, dating back to the above-mentioned time period (4500 – 2500 BC.) (Powell, 2013). At that point in time the meaning of this term was, “to accomplish or to achieve” (Collins English Dictionary, 2012). Following the development of this term, it was later notated to have become a mixture of the two terms “autos” and “hentes,” referring to “self (autos)” and “doer or being (hentes).” This in turn was later found in the form of “authentēs” meaning, “to act on one’s own authority.” In the fourteenth century, the Greeks took over this term and integrated it with their language structures which became, “authentikos”, relating to the concepts of being original and genuine (closely related to our contemporary understanding of the term). This term was also integrated into the Latin language, “authenticus” and because of this was lastly found in the French language to be “authentique” or “authentique”, however the meaning behind the word changed at the latter part to mean “authoritative”. The word “authentic” was later transitioned into the form “authenticity” in the 1650’s. It was only until the 1760’s the word “authenticity” was introduced as we know it today (Collins English Dictionary, 2012).

anatomy of the soft-drink. If a soft-drink is to be marketed as ‘the real thing’ and is bought by the consumer on the grounds of this, the product gains an authentic existence irrespective of the level of authenticity it might actually possess (Handler, 1986). Although this might seem to be a sub-division of authenticity that will struggle to be applied to theories encircling musicology. Richard Taruskin’s writings aim to fill this somewhat inconclusive connection between anthropology and musicology through the lens of authenticity.

### **Authenticity in Western art music**

As an experienced musicologist in the field of authenticity in Western art music, Taruskin in his essay *The Limits of Authenticity* (Taruskin, 1995: 77), argues that authenticity (paralleled to the views of Handler) is an approach to a performance nourished by an individual’s response to a specific musical piece (Taruskin, 1995: 77). He continues by exploring the possibility that the connection we make between historical realities and contemporary performance practice is never exclusively fixed on the achievement of an execution, as there always seems to be a degree of the individual’s preference involved (Taruskin, 1995: 70, 71).

Individualism within the framework of historical Western art music performance is a concept that not only drew the attention of Taruskin, but also of Will Crutchfield. In his essay *Fashion, conviction, and performance style in an age of revivals* (Kenyon, 1988: 25), Crutchfield argues that if it is, “staying true to what the composer wanted” what we are after, then a performance that is passionate and energetic by nature can be seen as authentic, because (according to Crutchfield) this was a basic requirement from any composer to his/her performers (Kenyon, 1988: 25). He continues (as evident through the historical account on the development of the linguistic term as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter) that one of the many meanings behind the term “authenticity” is linked to “authority”. If this is accepted as true, then one can argue that the sole author of a performance is the performer itself, making any performance authentic by nature (Kenyon, 1988: 26), if analysed through the lens of individualism. But why has authenticity in Western art music become such a focal point then?

According to Raymond Leppard, the human race had always been driven by the idea of progress. This resulted in our forerunners having little need to search earlier periods for any cultural worth (Leppard, 1988: 7). However, after the infamous bombing of Hiroshima at the latter part of the Second World War, the human race started searching for cultural significance from the past. Not to prove the level of progress that was made, but in an attempt

to search for a level of sustainability while everything around the human population seemed to be perishing (Leppard, 1988: 22).

Authenticity in Western art music can be subdivided into three branching categories, the first of which refers to fidelity to the score (Kenyon, 1988: 23). Today the most sufficient manner in which one can accomplish a certain level of fidelity to the score is through the employment of *Urtext* materials (Taruskin, 1995: 71). *Urtext* is loosely defined by Raymond Leppard in his book *Authenticity in music*, as “the closest possible reproduction of the composer’s manuscript” (1988: 32). Taruskin, makes no secret of his thoughts on the amount of mistakes one finds in these printed edition (1995: 71), but even if this was not the focal point, arguments exist that question the validity of these scores altogether. One such argument was put forth by Peter Kivy in his book, *Authenticities*. He believes that even if one was to execute the correct phrasing and dynamics in performance, one would only have achieved fidelity to the score with reference to those specific aspects, bearing in mind the countless amounts of features that need to be considered (1995: 46).

Secondly, authenticity can be achieved through the comprehension of the composer’s original intent in a given musical work (Kenyon, 1988: 23). In order to do so, one firstly needs to interpret that specific composer’s compositional style as well as the cultural context and specific time frame in which he/she needed to compose. This (according to Kivy) in turn needs to be re-understood, relevant to the conditions in which, that piece of music currently resides in, in contemporary time (Kivy, 1995: 45).

In an interview with Rebekka Sandmeier, she confirmed accordance with the views of Kivy as discussed above. Seen as a practitioner in Historically Informed Performance Practice (HIPP) and well-researched in the field of Western art music authenticity, she argued that the interaction between the relevance of a given musical work to its listeners and justice to the composer’s intentions as diverging poles, leads to the corner stone of the authenticity debate in its entirety. This because she believes that the only way we can keep early Western art music alive, is by making it aesthetically pleasurable to our audiences (Sandmeier, 2016).

Butt argues in his book, *Playing with history*, that the principle hypothesis of this sub-division is that composers slipped into the culture of their specific eras. Composers decided exactly what he/she wanted and it is up to our contemporary performance habits to realize those intentions (2002: 3).

The third argument of authenticity in Western art music and quite possibly the most widely debated, resides in the performance aspect. Authenticity in Western art music performance dates back to 1726 (Haynes, 2007: 123). In these times ( $\pm 1726$ ), there existed the “Academy of Ancient Music” in England (Haynes, 2007: 123). This was the first organization to perform works composed before its time (Haynes, 2007: 123), but it was only around the early 1950’s that Nikolaus Harnoncourt made the initial argument toward Historically Informed Performance Practice (HIPP). In the late 1960’s it transitioned to replicating every aspect of musical performance as we know it today (Haynes, 2007: 140) – phrasing, dynamics, articulation etc. It was in this time period that Historically Informed Performance became of public interest (Butt, 2002: 3).

Taruskin loosely defines HIPP as “conventions and knowledge” that enables a performer to create a performance that resides at the heart of what the composer originally intended the piece to sound like (1995: 91). However, with this in mind, singers in the 1880’s would never have thought to sing in a different style for different composers. Whether they sang Verdi, Mozart or Monteverdi, they would simply sing according to the common practices of the day (Kenyon, 1988: 22). According to Leppard, the wider audience currently supporting live music, believes that the music’s unalloyed message can only be communicated to the audience once we move closer to the precise conditions that reigned at the première performance of that specific work (Leppard, 1988: 72).

One such a group of works have recently been released on CD by conductor and musicologist on authenticity in Mozartean Opera, Teodor Currentzis. Currentzis strived towards re-creating the exact conditions of the première day of each work in the set. After arranging the use of period instruments, understanding the performance practice of Mozart’s music, (as will be discussed later in this chapter) Currentzis did extensive research on the weather conditions on the première dates of each of the works. After taking all these aspects into account, he recorded these Mozart opera’s as soon as the weather conditions were favourable (Currentzis, 2013: YouTube).

Even though Currentzis spent the passed four year executing this project, according to Butt, HIPP is merely a movement of our contemporary time that has been exhausted on intellectual level up to date (Butt, 2002: 7), however this does not mean opposition to the concept. “We have been in a prolonged state of cultural decline, a state that HIPP has the potential to rectify” - J. Butt (2002: 4).



Up to date, trends have been noticed relating to the impact on the Western art music industry as a product of authenticity in Western art music performance. Performance authenticity is currently resulting in an increasing amount of Western art music from the past being performed. This in turn is being supported by a large group of audience members that are unwilling to support works composed in their own era. Because of these growing audiences interested in music from the past, we have entered a generation of revivals (Kenyon, 1988: 22) resulting in a circular effect that seems to grow more tightly while excluding modern composers.

Throughout this era of “revivals”, it has become the greatest compliment to give to a performer that his/her performance was authentic. This, for the most part, means it is “genuine” or “traceable to a specific origin” (Taruskin, 1995: 68). This opinion as brought forward by Taruskin, is paralleled in the views of Crutchfield (Kenyon, 1988: 24), however Taruskin labels these commendatory souls as “purists” (Taruskin, 1995: 68). Through most of the above literature, we find that all the academia that is referred to, supports the idea of HIPP to a certain extent. One writer that does not seem to agree with the hypothesis of authenticity in Western art music performance is Peter le Huray. Le Huray argues in his book *Authenticity in performance* that the search for an authentic interpretation of a musical work does not necessarily mean there is just one specific interpretation, but rather a range of possibilities (1990:4). He continues that there never was, nor can there only be one, correct way of interpreting a specific musical work (Le Huray, 1990: 4).

Partially in accordance with these view points, local musicologist and advocate of HIPP, Erik Dippenaar believes that executing a performance of any given musical work through the principles of HIPP allows many different subtleties and nuances to emerge from the performance that would not be found in performances otherwise. Being a practitioner of HIPP combined with authenticity in Western art music as his main field of study on postgraduate level, Dippenaar underlined the importance of two specific aspects of the HIPP movement that form the cornerstones of his performance executions (2016).

Firstly, Dippenaar believes (parallel to Currentzis) that if you perform the music of any given time period, one should employ the tools that were used in that era. He argues, that by using period instruments the physical performance of the work will be easier to execute, considering that the work was initially written for that specific instrument. Because of this, he believes it will be easier to explore nuances within the music that will ultimately lead to a performance filled with subtleties that would otherwise become lost in a Historically

Uninformed Performance Practice (HUIP) performance. Although this is Dippenaar's belief, he does understand that financially it will be too demanding to have instruments made corresponding to each decade of a given century. Therefore, he agrees that although we currently only make use of a few period instruments (either made then or in our contemporary times) to cover all Western art music written prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the nature of these performances might not be fully "authentic", as the instrumental development from Monteverdi to Mozart alone was too great to only make use of one kind of period instrument (Dippenaar, 2016).

Secondly, Dippenaar is of the opinion that one should have a thorough understanding of the aesthetic approach (such as instrumentation, timbre and performance style) that the composer had towards a specific work. Integrating this with the use of period instruments will once again allow for an even deeper level of exploration into nuances and subtleties of the work (Dippenaar, 2016).

### **Authenticity in Opera**

"Opera is drama-made music and therefore should be evaluated as music." These are the words of Paul Thom in his writing *Aesthetics of Opera* (Thom, 2011: 597). Thom believes opera to be a genre of music and not of drama (Thom, 2011: 597) and because of this, Thom's opinion regarding authenticity in opera performance parallels the arguments of academia referred to earlier in this chapter. He argues that there are two main ways in which one can pursue authenticity in operatic performance practice. Firstly, through re-creating what is known about the performance style, dating back to the première of the specific piece (Thom, 2011: 581, 582). This is achieved through integrating elements such as period instruments, the vocal style, visual effects and movement of that period, resulting in an authentic driven artistic fusion on stage. One of the main elements within this artistic fusion, as mentioned above, is undoubtedly the vocal production and singing style.

The author is of the opinion that production of the human voice had undergone a drastic change within the beginning of nineteenth century. With the birth of the industrial revolution at said time, instruments were manufactured to produce a more vibrant timbre resulting in a louder sound emerging from the orchestra pit in operatic performances. The author realised through personal experience that for composers such as Verdi, this was simply compensated for by composing long legato phrases that reside in the upper third of the human voice range. Works were composed in this manner, to allow the singer to be heard over the ever-bigger and ever-louder orchestras of the time. This even more so in the succeeding works of Richard

Wagner (Author, 2015). However, back in the eighteenth century the human voice was a differently used instrument. In my interviews with Dippenaar and Sandmeier, it became apparent that the singers in Mozart's time produced a rather clean and pure sound. The main reason for this was their application of vibrato (Sandmeier, 2016) (Dippenaar, 2016).

Employing the use of vibrato has become a default way of singing in our contemporary times. As mentioned above, this is one of the main resources a singer used, after the industrial revolution, to enhance the volume of their voices to allow them to be heard over the orchestra in operatic performances, however in Mozart's music the use of vibrato was considered to be a musical ornament (Sandmeier, 2016) (Dippenaar, 2016). Vibrato was employed at the end of long phrases, and mainly used in harmonious sections of the music. Less vibrato was used in moments of dissonance and none was employed in shorter phrases. The latter is a great point of interest to Dippenaar, who argues that the phrasing in Mozart's operatic scores are much shorter than that of Verdi and Puccini's. For this reason, he always reminds his singers to shorten their phrases in performance, as this was a crucial compositional element of Mozart's writing (Dippenaar, 2016). An additional scholar who wrote on the use of vibrato in Mozart's music was Will Crutchfield. In his article in *The New York Times* he explains that vibrato was reserved for high points of expression. He continues by confirming that although the use of vibrato was significantly less, it is still not sure how these voices sounded. He believes that it did not sound like our contemporary early-music singers who flatten their voices into "agile pitch pipes", as he puts it (Crutchfield, 1988).

Another element of singing style that was used in abundance in Mozartean performances, but seems to be left out of contemporary performances, is the use of portamenti. In contemporary operatic performance, the use of portamenti is a technique used in the "bel canto" opera style to create long legato phrases. This singing effect is something that, according to my training, may not be used within the singing style of Mozart, however contrary to this, Dippenaar makes it clear that this was once again used in the form of ornamentation in Mozart's operatic scores and should be employed in such a manner in contemporary productions of Mozart's operas (Dippenaar, 2016). Concurrent with Dippenaar, Crutchfield confirms that vocal and violin theorists of Mozart's time describe the use of portamenti rather explicitly. He believes that revivalists are yet to execute this aspect of Mozartean performance in an historically accurate manner (Crutchfield, 1988).

Secondly, authenticity in performance can be pursued through the integration of new and old-fashioned elements as listed above. With this said, Thom stresses in his article that there are

aspects of contemporary operatic staging concepts that moves against the grain of an authentic operatic performance (Thom, 2011: 582). Firstly, it is often found within contemporary staging concepts that a certain production can be “displaced” to a different place and/or time period than it initially called for - on local soil, this is often the case for productions presented by *Cape Town Opera*, as noticed through personal experience. Secondly, Thom noticed that synchronic staging directors have the tendency to change, mix and add text to the existing libretto to suite his/her concept on stage (Thom, 2011: 582). To underline Thom’s discomfort with this action, he quotes the words of musicologist Michael Tonner that argues that staging directors are “sabotaging” the musical work they are representing (Thom, 2011: 582).

On local soil in interviews with Erik Dippenaar and Rebekka Sandmeier, the adaptation of eighteenth century opera was discussed through a different lens that questions the relevance of authenticity on eighteenth century opera altogether (Dippenaar, 2016).

As a starting point the main correlation between the two musicologists focus on the fact that musicians in the eighteenth century were not regarded as artists. They were mostly in employment of the aristocratic figures at their respective times. Musical works were composed predominantly for entertainment to the royalty. These works were changed and altered through the use of many different techniques. These included the use of identical musical themes between works of the same composer, changing a soprano aria to suite the tenor voice for example, and composing of new replacement arias to suite a new singer joining the cast after the première. It was only in the nineteenth century that musicians were constituted to be artists. In this time composers such as G. Verdi, composed works with very few alterations after its première and made it clear that there is only one way to perform their works. This was also the birth of authenticity in opera as we know it today (Sandmeier, 2016) (Dippenaar, 2016).

However, with this said, Dippenaar made it clear that an authentic version of an eighteenth century opera like *Don Giovanni* might be possible if one clearly states to which point in time one is aiming to accomplish an authentic version of said opera (Dippenaar, 2016).

In the case of *Don Giovanni* there are two premièred versions that could be used to pinpoint a specific authentic version.

## Authenticity in the “little book”

### *Don Giovanni – Prague vs. Vienna?*

*Don Giovanni* has two versions of its libretto and music as the opera had two premières. One in Prague and one in Vienna (Blyth, 1981: 478). Although the merit of authenticity is mostly granted to the Prague performance, Julian Rushton argues that the Viennese première was also the work of Mozart and Da Ponte, making it authentic by definition, however he supports the paradigm of the Prague performance being the “most” authentic (Rushton, 1981: 53).

The main difference between the two premières was the use of the final scene after Don Giovanni’s death. The Prague production made use of Mozart’s original ending to the opera which, according to Luke Dennis, reverts the opera back to its state of confusion regarding its comical and tragic elements. However, the Viennese première, in contrast to Prague, did not make use of the final scene which became common practice for this opera up until the mid 20th century - this argument is duly confirmed by Rushton (Rushton, 1981: 57). Dennis argues that this makes the opera tragic by definition, as it concludes with the demise of the hero of the opera. “Hero” is here seen as the main character, rather than an actual heroic figure (Dennis, n.d: 10).

Besides the final scene of the opera, there are other changes that have been made to the Viennese première. Firstly, Don Ottavio’s aria “Il mio tesoro” was replaced with “Dalla sua pace”. This was done because the tenor that sung the Viennese première (Morella) could apparently not manage the large amounts of coloratura passages, as his voice was not agile enough for this aria. It is because of this that Mozart composed the alternative aria, that only employs the use of long legato phrases with climactic points high in the tenor range, in the absence of any coloratura. Secondly, an additional aria was inserted for Donna Elvira, *Mi tradi* which was encircled with a newly composed recitative preceding it. Thirdly a duet was added between Zerlina and Leporello “Per queste tue” which also included a new recitative presiding it (Rushton, 1981: 53). According to Rushton, this duet is best if the Viennese version is delivered in its entirety (1981: 55). Lastly, Leporello’s escape aria “Ah pietá” was omitted (Rushton, 1981: 53) and replaced with a recitative, expressing the same plot line as the aria initially did (Rushton, 1981: 55). If all the changes are taken into account, the Viennese première was only lengthened by one musical number, but with a large amount of extra recitatives (Rushton, 1981: 57).

The insertion of Donna Elvira's additional aria, created a sense of the second act becoming one dimensional. This was the case as the aria was inserted after Don Ottavio's Act 2 aria. These two arias were in related key signatures and, over and above this, neither of the arias further the plot of the opera, which creates a sense of "sameness" as Steptoe put it (Steptoe, 1988: 200).

According to Rushton in his book *W. A. Mozart: Don Giovanni*, the main problem with the original Da Ponte libretto is that it seems to be a combination of various unrelated scenes. This created difficulty in the plot of Da Ponte's *Don Giovanni* regarding organic growth (Rushton, 1981: 45). Because of this and the dispute of authenticity between the Vienna and Prague version, musicians started with an integration of the two versions based on the strengths and weaknesses of each première. This resulted in a production as was broadcasted in Munich in 1932. In this production (according to Eric Blom) the duet between Zerlina and Leporello was omitted as well as Donna Elvira's aria *Mi tradi*. Don Giovanni's *Metà di voi* as well as Leporello's *Ah Pietà* remained in the performance. From this it might seem that the conductor was chasing the Prague première version, however he inserted both Don Ottavio's *Il mio tesoro* as well as his *Dalla sua pace*, which clearly implies a combination between the two versions (Blom, 1932: 381). Yet another example of this, is from personal experience. In the production of *Don Giovanni* by Cape Town Opera in 2013, conductor Kamal Khan, inserted all the additional musical numbers and additional recitatives, besides the duet between Leporello and Zerlina.

The final focal point of this argument resides within the use of Donna Elvira's *Mi tradi*. Many conductors around the world duly agree with Rushton and Blom, that this aria is simply too beautiful to be left out of productions, and hence, it has become common practice to include this aria into performances of the original Prague version (Rushton, 1981: 57) (Blom, 1932: 381).

Alexander Kuchinka (Director of the original *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* in Vienna), made it explicitly clear in my interview with him in September 2015, that an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* was definitely not his aim. He trusted his gut and played around with the musical material of the original opera. With this said, he expressed that he never wanted to do damage to Da Ponte's original libretto (Kuchinka, 2015).

Through the understanding of the difference between the two versions of *Don Giovanni*, the next discussion surrounds the comical and serious elements of each version – one of the most

widely discussed topics surrounding authenticity in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Considering the current level of comedy in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, it is relevant to understand whether Mozart and Da Ponte intended the work to be comical or serious mainly in the libretto and secondarily in the compositional style.

### ***Buffo or not?***

In Mozart's personal written notes of the 28th of October 1787, he described *Don Giovanni* as an *Opera buffo* implying that the piece is comical by nature (John, 1983: 13). However, with this said, his previous opera, *le Nozze di Figaro* was also marked as such whilst retaining a much less tragic plot than that of *Don Giovanni* (John, 1983: 8). This argument is not only put forth by Nicholas John but also by Andrew Steptoe in his book, *The Mozart-Da Ponte Operas* (Steptoe, 1988: 199).

*Don Giovanni* has all the aspects of a comic opera, the main theme of which is based on the power struggle between the lower class and nobility. This is evident through the constant conflict between Don Giovanni himself and the peasant characters, such as Zerlina, Masetto and Leporello (John, 1983: 9). In the second act, Don Giovanni and Leporello switches clothing in an attempt to disguise Don Giovanni. This device is arguably the most comical effect in the classical opera period (John, 1983: 15). Peter Burkholder also describes characters such as Leporello as *Buffo*, as he is characterized by the "buffoonery" aspects, as he puts it (Burkholder, 1960: 563). – The compositional elements that create this characterization will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. However, with this said, *Don Giovanni* employs many aspect of serious opera as well. Through the big number of noble characters such as Don Giovanni, Donna Anna, Donna Elvira and Don Ottavio and ultimately through the use of the supernatural elements of hell and a statue that comes to life, the elements of serious opera are furthermore highlighted. This, as described by Steptoe, leads to a constant exchange between the comical and serious elements of the opera (Steptoe, 1988: 199). The difference between the two styles of opera is not only visible in the libretto of this opera, but also in the music. Mozart wrote very fast and "buffo" like arias for the peasant characters such as Leporello's *Madamina*, while the serious characters were all given grand concert arias with long legato lines and flourishing coloratura passages such as Don Ottavio's *Il mio tesoro* (John, 1983: 9).

Although the use of the above-mentioned numbers remained true for the most part of the classical period, by the time of *Don Giovanni*, convictions of the 18th century opera had



started to fade. Examples of this are clearly visible in the musical aspects of the opera. In operas prior to *Don Giovanni*, the characters of nobility would be given at least double the amount of arias than the peasant characters, but in *Don Giovanni* we find that Mozart only gave Don Giovanni himself one more aria (*Deh vieni*, *Metà di voi* and *Fin ch'han dal vino*) than Zerlina (*Batti, batti* and *Vedrai carino*) and Leporello (*Madamina*, and *Ah, pietà*) (John, 1983: 14). Furthermore, the noble characters were not only oppressed, but the peasant characters were uplifted. This is evident when Mozart gave Zerlina the only solo lines in the Act 1 finale *Tutto, tutto*, as well as in the Act 2 finale *Questo è il fin*, while only writing canonic harmonies for the noble characters like Donna Elvira and Donna Anna (Steptoe, 1988: 201).

One of the most important (if not the most) arguments on this matter is brought forward by Edward J. Dent in his book *Don Giovanni*. Here Dent argues that ironically enough the most comical of characters in *Don Giovanni*, is Don Giovanni himself. This is mostly highlighted through the music that Mozart wrote for the character. On closer inspection one will find that out of the three arias Don Giovanni was given, not one of them fit the grand concert style aria format of Mozart's serious opera arias. In contrast, he was given one aria that is played in absence of the orchestra and solely accompanied by a mandolin - *Deh vieni alla finestra*. The second aria, *Fin ch'han dal vino*, fits the typical buffo aria archetype. The aria employs the use of many words sung very quickly and in close proximity to one and other, resulting in a "chatty" sound. This buffo style was also the starting point of the *Fach* we now know as *bass buffo* (Dent, 1938: xxi). Lastly, the third aria of the Don, *Metà di voi* simply does not reach a climactic point. It is a rather repetitive aria that dies out to the end in a decrescendo, resulting in an aria that is usually omitted in performance (Dent, 1938: xxi). In contrast to this Peter Burkholder argues in his book *A History of Western Music* that Don Giovanni is a *mezzo-carattere* (middle character) (Burkholder, 1960: 561). Burkholder explains that Mozart created this character that possesses the ability to pass between the *buffo* and *seria* elements of operatic character archetypes. He furthermore classifies the role of Donna Elvira in this category, as he believes that she is a comic character posing as a serious one (Burkholder, 1960: 563).

Might this be what Mozart intended for *Don Giovanni* as a unit? Do we see signs of artistic freedom through Mozart's need to bring the diverging poles of comical and serious elements together in an attempt to reject the compositional and interpretative norms of his contemporaries?



The opposite side of the spectrum is Donna Anna who arguably can be seen as the most serious character in the opera. Evidence of this can be found in Mozart's music. Donna Anna is the only character in the original Prague version of Da Ponte's libretto that had been given accompanied recitatives before both her arias. As comic opera has a range of default compositional functions as its characteristics, the use of accompanied recitatives are characteristic of serious opera. These views are paralleled in the beliefs of Burkholder (Burkholder, 1960: 563).

Although all the comical compositional elements in the opera have been highlighted through the above arguments, the climatic point of the opera that immediately levels the playing field of comic versus tragedy, is the entrance of the Commendatore's statue in the Act 2 finale. According to Steptoe, this scene is the reason for the dispute on this subject matter. The entrance of the statue is a clear operatic sign of serious opera, as it deals with the supernatural element. At this point in the opera, the audience members are almost certain that the opera will end tragically, however this trail of thought is immediately neutralized after Don Giovanni's death in the final scene. Here the comic elements are introduced yet again with specific reference to the presto finale *Questo è il fin* (as will be discussed in depth later in this study) (Steptoe, 1988: 204). The argument that the final scene restores the comical element of the opera's plot is duly supported by H. E. W. in his article *Mozart at the Old Vic* (H.E.W., 1924: 164).

In an interview with Alexander Kuchinka, the question was raised whether he thought *Don Giovanni* to be a comic or serious opera. He argued that he does not feel comfortable making a strict categorization of the work. Concurrent with the views of Burkholder, he asked why it can't be equally comical and serious. The work should rather be classified as a *Komödie Dramatik* (Comedy Drama), as he put it. Conclusively and rather contradictory to his own statement, he argued that it soon became clear to him that one will only be able to make a respectable shortening of the work, through the use of ironic comedy (Kuchinka, 2015).

I will aim to prove Kuchinka's statement in the latter part concurrent or not. – Is it true that we will only be able to make an adequate reduction of *Don Giovanni* through the use of comedy? I am still of the opinion that Mozart wanted to wash out the separating boundaries between comical and serious elements. Therefore, through *Don Giovanni*, I believe that henceforth in opera performance worldwide, comedy in opera does not necessarily imply comic opera.

### ***Authentic Alla Breve?***

Although Sandmeier concurs with most of Dippenaar's views, there was one very intriguing point raised by Sandmeier. She believes that Mozart's *Singspiel* such as *Der Schauspieldirektor* and *Die Zauberflöte* has a greater ability to fit into the Alla Breve form as it does not make use of recitatives between the musical numbers, but rather German dialogue. She believes that these dialogues should be updated to suite the contemporary applicability of its listeners. Although she is supportive of creating a socially applicable version of an opera's plot, she explained that there are many comical nuances and plot details in Mozart's recitatives that will get lost if one replaces them with dialogue, which, to her mind, is rather unsatisfying (Sandmeier, 2016).

When both of these scholars were asked about their thoughts on the Alla Breve format and the changes made to Da Pont's *Don Giovanni* libretto, they both agreed that the alteration of eighteenth century opera to any extent does not bother them in the least. If the plot, choice of musical numbers and staging concept are comprehensible and relatable to the audience in itself, they have no objections. Further, the change of Da Ponte's original libretto, to them, is more justifiable in *Don Giovanni* than other Mozart operas, because the legends of *Don Juan*, upon which *Don Giovanni* is based, is so well known, it allows for interesting effect, should the plot differ from the original myth (Sandmeier, 2016) (Dippenaar, 2016).

It has become apparent in the literature on authenticity above, that many different scholars have strung together theories of how they perceive authenticity in Western art music performance. If these were all brought together, it becomes virtually impossible to have a truly unauthentic production. If one were to integrate a new *Alla Breve* libretto with the music of the original Prague performance, the production would still be authentic according to Thom. If I was to integrate music from both the Prague and Viennese premières it would be considered authentic by Rushton's standards. Even if the performers of the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto merely performed with enthusiasm, excluding any other technical aspects of the opera in itself, it would still be considered to be authentic according to the texts of Crutchfield.

However, these views are not fully shared by all the involved parties of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. In an interview with Alfred Legner (producer of the South African *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*) it seems that his views on the impact of the authenticity debate on the *Alla Breve* format, is much aligned with the arguments of Huray as discussed in the literature above.

Legner believes that opera should be seen as a living organism that needs to adapt in order for it to become relevant to our contemporary times. Although he further mentioned that the adaption should not need to influence the quality of music (Legner, 2015). In contrast to this Raimondo van Staden (director of the South African *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*) believes that the authenticity debate does apply to the *Alla Breve* format irrespective of which one of the various theories explored above had been implemented. “If we argue the debate from a certain perspective and decide to produce an *Alla Breve* production on that perspective, then the authenticity debate has already influenced the *Alla Breve* form” (Van Staden, 2015).

Although it has become apparent through the course of this chapter that alteration to Mozart and Da Ponte’s work might be permissible, there remains one vital question unanswered.

Is it wise to alter the plot of an opera to such an extent that the original story line is lost, considering the high level of social applicability in might have?

It occurred to me that Kenyon argued the contrary to my outcome. He said that the current supporting audience of live Western art music is in a downward spiral, because of the large amounts of “authentic” music from yesteryear that are being performed. He continued with an explanation that this is resulting in much less support towards our contemporary composers (Kenyon, 1988: 22). Might this be why *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* has such a successful performance rate? Might it be because it moves against the norm of being “authentic”?

Although this might be a feasible argument, the sociologically related topic of “popular culture”, may deliver some clarity as to why.

## **Popular Culture**

Popular culture (or otherwise known as “mass culture” or “mass society”) traces its roots back to the Second World War. The concept was brought to life by German intellectuals such as Hannah Arendt that attempted to understand the “totalitarian” societies of Nazi Germany - as put forth by Chandra Mukerji in his article *Popular culture* (Mukerji & Schudon, 1986: 56). It was in the 1950’s and 1960’s that “popular culture” as concept became a heated debate between the negatives of capitalism and the negatives on socialism (Mukerji & Schudon, 1986: 56).

Popular culture (as it is currently being discussed in sociology) has various definitions. The overarching five are listed:

“A poor / an incompetent version of art.” (Radway, 1980: 138)

“Culture that is favoured or well liked by many people.” (Parker, 2011: 150)

“Culture that originates from the people.” (Parker, 2011: 153)

“Culture made possible through technological change, by the use of means of mass cultural productions.” (Parker, 2011: 152)

“Culture that is left, after we have decided what is high culture.” (Parker, 2011: 151)

Last mentioned being the focal point in this discussion was given clarity by William Warner in his article, *The resistance to popular culture* (Warner, 1990).

In an attempt to recover what was considered to be “true” culture at the time, terms of access to cultural happenings such as drama, opera and orchestral music, was defined by performance institutions and principles of preference (Warner, 1990: 728). After these cultural activities were partitioned as high culture (Warner, 1990: 727), these art forms suffered from a severe decline in popularity as orchestras were separated from bands which lead to orchestras being perceived as a higher social class of performance, to name but one example (Warner, 1990: 728). Might it be that *Opera Alla Breve* breaks down the barrier between high and low culture and that this is the driving force behind the success of the Alla Breve form. Is this art form bridging opera into the realm of popular culture?

As argued by Warner, anything that seeks some sort of cultural popularity, depends on those who consume it for their own purpose or pleasure (Warner, 1990: 733). Parallel with this argument is Janice Radway’s case in her article, *Popular culture as play* (Radway, 1980). Here she compares popular culture (or “conservative expression” as she calls it) to the figurative “play” in a child’s life (Radway, 1980: 149).

Happy endings, events or plot points in novels, dramas and operas are not part of an inexact representation of reality, but rather a need from the human race to emphasize dominance over everyday occurrences. The audience conforms reality to a pattern which they would like to see that does not necessarily reflect reality (Radway, 1980: 149). As concurrently explained by John Street in his book *Politics and Popular Culture* (Cloonan, 1998), the manner in which people / audiences alter and reject products of the cultural industry (Mukerji & Schudson, 1986: 57) and the manipulation of political and social elements towards the audience by the cultural trade (Cloonan, 1998: 356), are integral parts of the popular culture movement in the operatic field. If one considers the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* as well

as Van Staden's views in the e-mail interview attached (Addendum D), might it be that the manipulation of Da Ponte's original libretto is the moving force behind the success of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*? Is it because of the level of seriousness surrounding current political and social issues that are presently being manipulated through the use of humour, that is creating this high level of popularity amongst audiences?

This study aims to further investigate the diverging poles of authenticity versus popular culture within the framework of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. In the world's current negatively inclined social and political standing, authenticity in staged works and popular culture cannot be seen as equal, because of the social aspects such as rape, murder and sex that are being "rejected" by the cultural industry - as argued by Mukerji (Mukerji & Schudon, 1986), Street (Cloonan, 1998), Radway (Radway, 1980) and Warner (Warner, 1990). - It is time for our so-called "popular" culture to stop rejecting these social issues (the same social issues that Mozart and Da Ponte were faced with in 1787) and allow works such as *Don Giovanni* to be a vehicle of transport, empowering us to deal with our current social restraints on a psychological level.

## *Chapter 5: An Authentic Don Giovanni Alla Breve*

In this chapter it is my aim to deliver a practical representation of the preceding research by providing an alternative reduction for *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. The guiding principle is to stay as close as possible to Da Ponte's original text and thus honour the social issues this opera originally intended to take on. This chapter also adds a creative component to this thesis.<sup>7</sup>

Through the course of this chapter it will become apparent that different musical numbers are employed in comparison to the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. This was done in an attempt to retain the flow of musical numbers as performed at the Prague première as discussed in chapter four of this thesis. With this said, this chapter is conceived by using the same chronological flow of scenes as the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. The libretto of these scenes is however reconstructed according to the translations of Da Ponte's original libretto to ensure that the relevant social challenges within the opera are exposed rather than diminished through the use of comedy.

The main noticeable difference in construction between the original *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* and my attempt at a more authentic re-reduction is that I chose not to make use of a narrator. From an artistic and theatrical point of view, I decided against the use of a narrator to ensure that the plot remains as closely related to Da Ponte's original libretto as possible and to ensure that no social challenges are underemphasized.

To ensure full comprehension of the layout of this chapter, I have employed the use of a colouring system. Below the titles of the musical numbers (i.e. the arias and ensembles) are presented in **red**, the newly devised spoken dialogue is presented in **blue** and the musical number translations (using Da Ponte's original libretto) have been presented in **green**. For the purpose of comprehension of the full story line in the text below I present the English translation of the arias of Da Ponte's libretto. However, in performance the arias will of course be sung in Italian. For the purpose of the thesis, the translations of the musical numbers have been sourced from Nico Castel's 'International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and Translation' of *Don Giovanni* as found in *The Libretti of Mozart's Completed Operas*:

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<sup>7</sup> The result of this re-reduction is probably best tested in performance and it was my original intention to perform this work at the Music Department for examination purposes. My request to do so was however not approved by the Postgraduate Programme Committee as the Music Department at Stellenbosch University did not offer a Practice-based Masters at the time of my studies.

*Volume. I*, published in 1997. Please note that this is the reason why the source is not continuously cited / referenced though the course of this chapter.

<i>Don Giovanni Alla Breve</i> Number	Da Ponte Act and Scene
0) Overture	Overture
0.a) Ah soccorso! (Commendatore, Don Giovanni, Leporello)	Act 1, Scene 1
-	Act 1, Scene 2
-	Act 1, Scene 3
-	Act 1, Scene 4
1) Ah! Chi mi dice mai (Donna Elvira) 2) Madamina, il catalogo è questo (Leporello)	Act 1, Scene 5
-	Act 1, Scene 6
3) GiovINETTE, che fate all'amore (Zerlina, Masetto, Chorus)	Act 1, Scene 7
4) Ho capito (Masetto)	Act 1, Scene 8
4.a) Quel casinetto è mio (Don Giovanni) 5) La ci darem (Don Giovanni, Zerlina)	Act 1, Scene 9
-	Act 1, Scene 10
-	Act 1, Scene 11
5.a) Ah! Ti ritrovo ancor (Donna Elvira) 6) Non ti fidar (Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Don Giovanni)	Act 1, Scene 12

7) Don Ottavio son morta...Or sai chi l'onore (Donna Anna)	Act 1, Scene 13
-	Act 1, Scene 14
8) Fin ch'han dal vino (Don Giovanni)	Act 1, Scene 15
9) Batti, batti (Zerlina)	Act 1, Scene 16
10.a) Presto, Presto	Act 1, Scene 17
-	Act 1, Scene 18
-	Act 1, Scene 19
-	Act 1, Scene 20
10.b) Riposate, vezzose ragazze! (Don Giovanni, Leporello, Zerlina, Masetto)	Act 1, Scene 21
10.c) Da bravi, via, ballate. (Leporello, Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Don Giovanni, Zerlina) 10.d) Trema, trema (Leporello, Don Giovanni, Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Masetto, Zerlina)	Act 1, Scene 22
-	Act 2, Scene 1
-	Act 2, Scene 2
11) Deh! Vieni alla finstra (Don Giovanni)	Act 2, Scene 3
-	Act 2, Scene 4
-	Act 2, Scene 5
-	Act 2, Scene 6



12) Sola, sola (Donna Elvira, Leporello)	Act 2, Scene 7
12) Tergi il ciglio (Don Ottavio, Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Leporello)	Act 2, Scene 8
12) Ferma, briccone! (Zerlina, Masetto, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Donna Elvira, Leporello)	Act 2, Scene 9
13) Il mio tesoro (Don Ottavio)	Act 2, Scene 10
	Act 2, Scene 11
13.a) Di rider finirai (Commendatore) 13.b) Rinaldo (Commendatore) 14) O statua gentilissima (Leporello, Don Giovanni)	Act 2, Scene 12
15) Crudele... Non mi dir (Donna Anna)	Act 2, Scene 13
-	Act 2, Scene 14
-	Act 2, Scene 15
-	Act 2, Scene 16
16a) Don Giovanni (Commendatore, Leporello, Don Giovanni, Chorus)	Act 2, Scene 17
16b) Questo è il fin (Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Leporello, Zerlina, Masetto)	Final Scene

Table 5.1: *Authentic Don Giovanni Alla Breve* scenes vs. Da Ponte's libretto scenes.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> To ensure full comprehension of this table, please cross reference the information in the table with the table provided in chapter 2 – Page 42.

## 0. Overture

### **Leporello:**

*(Walking on talking to the audience)*

You know, I work night and day for this man, who doesn't appreciate anything I do for him.

I need to endure rain and wind.

I eat badly, I sleep badly!

I also want to play the gentlemen!

I don't want to serve HIM any longer!

*(Hears voices off-stage)*

Oh no! People are coming!

I can't be seen...

*(Leaves the scene)*

### **Donna Anna:** *(Chasing Don Giovanni onto the scene)*

*(To Don Giovanni)*

Unless you kill me, don't think that I will ever allow you to escape!

### **Don Giovanni:**

You foolish woman!

You will never know who I am!

*(Trying to engage with her physically)*

### **Commendatore:**

*(Entering the scene to separate them and standing in front of Donna Anna to defend her)*

Leave my daughter alone you scoundrel!

If you want to get to her, you will have to fight me!

*(Donna Anna runs off stage)*

*(Don Giovanni stabs the Commendatore)*

## 0.a Ah Soccorso... - Commendatore, Don Giovanni, Leporello

### **Commendatore:**

Ah! Help! ...

I'm betrayed! ...

The murderer...has wounded me...and from my throbbing breast... I feel... my soul leaving me...

Don Giovanni:

Ah! Already the wretch has fell...

Anguished and agonising I already see his soul departing from his breast.

Leporello:

What a misdeed!

What an excess!

I feel my heart beating in my chest from fright.

I don't know what to do or to say.

*(The Commendatore dies)*

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Whispering)*

Leporello!

Where are you?

**Leporello:**

I'm here, unfortunately.

Who's dead?

You or the old man?

**Don Giovanni:**

What a stupid question!

Obviously the old man!

**Leporello:**

*(Sarcastic)*

Oh Bravo!

Two charming deeds!

First you violate his daughter and then you kill him.

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Threatening Leporello)*

BE QUIET you fool, or I swear I will do something that you will seriously regret!

**Leporello:**

No! Please sir!

I don't want anything unpleasant to happen.

But... may I... tell you something?

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Irritated)*

What?

**Leporello:**

*(Insecure)*

Well sir, you live your life... somewhat... like a... a scoundrel.

**Don Giovanni:**

Who the hell do you think you are?

You irresponsible man!

*(Don Giovanni notices the smell of a woman)*

**Leporello:**

No please master!

I won't talk, I won't even breath...

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Interrupting Leporello)*

Shht... Do you smell that?

I think I smell the scent of a woman!

**Leporello:**

*(to the audience)*

Oh Wow... What a sense of smell...

**Don Giovanni:**

I can tell by her scent, that she is beautiful... Come quickly!

*(Don Giovanni takes Leporello to hide as Elvira enters)*

**1. “Ah! Chi mi dice mai” – Donna Elvira, Don Giovanni, Leporello**

Elvira:

Ah! Who can ever tell me where that barbarous man is, who I loved to my shame and who betrayed his faith to me?

Ah! if I find that impious man again, and if he still doesn't return to me, I'd like to slaughter him horribly. I'd like to tear out his heart!

Don Giovanni:

Did you hear? Some lovely lady has been abandoned by her swain... Poor little thing! Let us try to console her torment.

Leporello:

Thus he has consoled 1800 of them.

Don Giovanni:

Young Lady...

*(Donna Elvira turn to face them)*

**Leporello**

Oh! Wonderful it's Elvira!

**Donna Elvira:**

*(To Don Giovanni)*

You!... You monster!... I trusted you!

You made me your wife!

And after seducing my heart you just ran away and abandoned me after just three days?

**Don Giovanni:**

Oh! I have my reasons for all of this my dear Donna Elvira...

*(Signalling Leporello to distract her as he flees the scene)*

**Leporello:**

*(Taking Elvira by the arm, distracting her from Don Giovanni escaping)*

Madam.... Truly... In this world, since a square is not round....

**Donna Elvira:**

*(Interrupting Leporello)*

Do you think my grief is a joke?

Do you think this little situation of ours is funny?

*(Turning around looking for Don Giovanni and noticing he has fled)*

And you *(pointing to where Don Giovanni stood)* ...Shit! He got away again?!

**Leporello:**

Madam, please calm yourself!

You are not the first and definitely not the last woman that he has abandoned in love.

*(Lifting a little black book)*

Just have a look at this little book.

This is a list of the names of all his beauties; every town, every district and every country has borne witness to the womanizing ways of Don Giovanni.

**2. “Madamina, il catalogo è questo” – Leporello**

**Leporello:**

*(To Donna Elvira)*

My dear lady, this is a catalogue of the beauties my master has loved.

A catalogue that I had made myself; observe and read with me.

In Italy 640, in Germany 231, 100 in France, in Turkey 91, but in Spain there are already 1003.

There are among these country girls, maids and city woman.

There are countesses, baronesses, marchionesses, princesses and there are woman of every rank, of every shape, of every age.

He has the habit of praising the blond ones for their gentleness, the dark ones for their constancy and the very fair ones for their sweetness.

In the winter he wants the plump one, in the summer he wants the lean one.

The large one is majestic and the little one is always charming.

He seduces old ladies for the pleasure of putting them onto the list;

his predominant passion is the young beginner;  
he doesn't care if she is rich, if she's ugly, if she's beautiful;  
as long as she wears a skirt, you know what he does.

*(Leporello leaves the scene)*

**Donna Elvira:**

Is this the reward that I get for my love?  
I only feel revenge shouting within me, only anger and contempt!  
Let me go and find that bastard! He's probably partying as usual!

*(Elvira leaves the scene)*

*(Partygoers including Zerlina and Masetto enter the scene)*

**3. “Giovinette, che fate all’amore” – Zerlina & Masetto**

Zerlina:

Young girls, who trifle with love, don't let time pass you by.  
If your heart boils in your chest, you can see in this wedding, what the cure for it is.  
What pleasure it will be!

Female Chorus:

What pleasure it will be!  
La ra la!

Masetto:

Young fickle men, don't go roaming here and there;  
a fool's holiday doesn't last long, but for me it has not yet begun.  
What pleasure it will be!

Male Chorus:

What pleasure it will be!  
La ra la!

Zerlina, Masetto:

Come my dear one, and let us enjoy ourselves, and let us sing, and let us dance and let us skip.

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Enters the scene with Leporello at his side)*

My dearest friends, what's going on here? Are we celebrating a wedding?

**Zerlina:**

*(Pulling Masetto closer)*

Yes, sir. I am the bride and this is my husband Masetto - a man with the very best of hearts.

**Don Giovanni:**

O my dear Masetto! My dear Zerlina! Let us be friends!

*(To Leporello, calling him closer)*

Leporello, take them to my villa! Spoil them with the best coffee, chocolate and wine!

*(Without the others hearing)*

In fact, make sure Masetto is happy.

*(Leporello nods in acknowledgement and takes Masetto by the arm to leave)*

**Masetto:**

*(To Giovanni)*

Sorry meneer... Zerlina can't stay without me.

**Don Giovanni:**

Oh, but she is in the hands of a cavalier. Trust me. Just go, she will come with me shortly.

**Masetto:**

*(Notices Don Giovanni's plan to be alone with Zerlina)*

Oh God!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Threatens Masetto with a gun)*

Masetto, look out! If you don't leave immediately, you will be sorry!



#### 4. “Ho Capito” - Masetto

Masetto:

I’ve understood, yes sir!

I bow my head and I go;

since it pleases you like that, I won’t make further objections, no.

A cavalier you are indeed.

I cannot doubt in faith.

I can tell by the kind gestures that you wish for me to have.

*(To Zerlina)*

You little rouge, you little rascal, you were always my downfall.

*(To Leporello)*

I’m coming!

*(Back to Zerlina)*

You stay! It’s the right thing to do

Let our cavalier make a “cavalieress” out of you!

*(Masetto leaves the scene with Leporello)*

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Touching Zerlina)*

At last we are free! So what do you think my dear... didn't I handle that well?

**Zerlina:**

*(Pushing his hands away)*

Sir, he is my husband!

**Don Giovanni:**

Who! Him? Do you think a noble cavalier as myself can just sit back and see your golden, sweet face be miss-treated by a scoundrel like him?

*(Starting to touch her again)*

You are not made to be a peasant.

A different future awaits you with those shady eyes.

*(Touching her bottom lip)*

These lips are so lovely.

*(Touching her fingers)*

These fingers feel as if I am touching butter and smelling roses.

### **Zerlina**

*(Pushing him away)*

I don't want to be left deceived!

You cavaliers are seldom honest and sincere.

### **Don Giovanni**

*(Moving closer to her)*

Oh no! That's a common misperception!

You can tell a noble person's honesty by his eyes.

*(Turning her face to look into his eyes.)*

Come, let's not lose any more time...

## **4.a “Quel casinetto è mio...” - Don Giovanni**

Don Giovanni:

That little house is mine.

We will be alone, and there, my love, we can get married

## **5. “La ci darem” - Don Giovanni, Zerlina**

Don Giovanni:

There we will hold hands.

There you will tell me “yes”.

Look, it isn't far, let us leave from here my love.

Zerlina:

I would like to, but I won't like to...

My heart is trembling...

It's true I'd be happy,

*(To herself)*

but he could just be tricking me.

Don Giovanni:

Come my lovely delight!

Zerlina:

I feel sorry for Masetto.

Don Giovanni:

I will change your fate.

Zerlina:

*(To herself)*

Soon I won't be able to resist.

Don Giovanni, Zerlina:

Let us go, my love, to soothe the pangs of an innocent love.

**Donna Elvira:**

*(Interrupting)*

Stop! You scoundrel!

I am just in time to save this innocent woman from your cruel hands!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(To Elvira)*

My dear, can't you see that I am trying to amuse myself?

**Donna Elvira:**

*(With attitude)*

Amuse yourself?! Really!? Amuse yourself!?

I know exactly how you "amuse" yourself you idiot!

**Zerlina:**

*(Shocked)*

What's going on?!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Pretending to be sincere)*

My dear, this sad woman is in love with me and out of pity, I must pretend to love her, because I am a man with a good heart.

**Donna Elvira:**

Don't believe a word this man says!

He is a liar!

You should learn from my torments how to trust his heart and let your fear grow from my danger!

*(Don Ottavio and Donna Anna enters)*

**Donna Anna:**

Ottavio, what are we going to do?!

**Don Ottavio:**

Anna my love, what can I do to avenge your honour?

*(Sees Don Giovanni)*

Ah! Don Giovanni

**Don Giovanni:**

*(To himself and shocked)*

Really?! I don't need this right now...

**Don Ottavio:**

*(To Don Giovanni)*

We are in need of your friendship.

**Don Giovanni:**

*(To himself)*

Oh! Thank God! I can breathe again!

*(To Anna and Ottavio - notices Anna is upset)*

My lovely Donna Anna, why are you crying?

Who is the cruel man that upset you like this?

*(Trying to touch her in a flirty manner)*

Who dared to disrupt your peaceful lives?

### **5.a “Ah ti ritrovo...” - Donna Elvira**

Donna Elvira:

Ah! I caught you again, you perfidious monster!

### **6. Quartet - Don Giovanni, Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio**

Donna Elvira:

*(To Donna Anna)*

Do not trust, oh unhappy woman, in his faithless heart.

He already betrayed me and now that barbarous man wishes to betray you also.

Donna Anna, Don Ottavio:

*(To themselves)*

Heavens!

What a noble appearance!

What sweet majesty!

Her pallor, her tears fill me with pity.

Don Giovanni:

*(To Donna Anna and Don Ottavio)*

The poor girl is crazy, my friends.

Leave me with her, maybe she will calm down.

Donna Elvira:

*(To Donna Anna and Don Ottavio)*

Ah, don't believe the perfidious man!

Don Giovanni:

She is crazy, don't pay attention.

Donna Elvira:

Stay, oh gods, stay...

Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Don Giovanni:

I feel the stirring of an unknown torment whirling inside my soul telling me a hundred things about that unhappy woman which my soul cannot understand.

Donna Elvira:

I feel the stirring of an unknown torment whirling inside my soul telling me a hundred things about that traitor which my soul cannot understand.

Don Ottavio:

*(To Donna Anna)*

I won't leave here until I find out the truth.

Donna Anna:

*(To herself)*

Her face nor her speech has the air of madness.

Don Giovanni:

*(To himself)*

If I leave, they might suspect something.

Donna Elvira:

*(To herself)*

From his face, one can judge his dark soul.

Don Ottavio:

*(To Don Giovanni pointing at Donna Elvira)*

Then that woman...

Don Giovanni:

*(Responding to Don Ottavio)*

Is a bit crazy

Donna Anna:

*(To Donna Elvira pointing at Don Giovanni)*

Then that man...

Donna Elvira:

*(Responding to Donna Anna)*

Is a traitor.

Don Giovanni:

*(To Donna Elvira)*

Unhappy woman!

Donna Elvira:

*(To Don Giovanni)*

Liar!

Don Ottavio, Donna Anna:

I'm beginning to doubt

Don Giovanni:

*(Softly to Donna Elvira)*

Keep quiet for people are starting to gather around us.

Be a bit more prudent, you will bring criticism upon yourself.

Donna Elvira:

*(Strongly to Don Giovanni)*

Do not hope for that you scoundrel.

I have lost my caution.

I want to reveal your guilt and my state to everyone!

Donna Anna, Don Ottavio:

*(Aside)*

Those subdued words and his change of colour, are explicit indications that make me determine the truth.

*(Donna Elvira runs off the scene taking Zerlina with her)*

**Don Giovanni:**

*(To Anna and Ottavio noticing that Donna Anna is staring at him in confusion)*

My friends, I need to go after her.

I don't want her to do something irrational!

*(To Donna Anna)*

Forgive me lovely Donna Anna.

If I can be of any further assistance, I will be waiting for you at my home.

*(Gives Anna a business card with his address)*

Farewell.

**7. “Don Ottavio, son morta...Or sai chi...” - Donna Anna, Don Ottavio**

Donna Anna:

Don Ottavio, I'm dead!

Don Ottavio:

What had happened?

Donna Anna:

For pity's sake, help me!

Don Ottavio:

My beloved, take courage.

Donna Anna:

Oh gods! He is the murderer of my father...

Don Ottavio:

What are you saying?

Donna Anna:

Do not doubt any longer.



Everything about his voice recalled in my heart that worthless man who in my apartment...

Don Ottavio:

Oh heaven! Could it be possible that under the sacred mantle of friendship...  
But how did it happen, relate to me the strange event.

Donna Anna:

It was already somewhat late at night and I was quite alone in my room.  
To my misfortune, I saw a man wrapped in a cloak who I initially had mistaken to be you but I realised that I was mistaken...

Don Ottavio:

Stars! Continue.

Donna Anna:

He silently approached me and wants to embrace me.  
I try to free myself but he grasps me tighter.  
I scream!  
No one came.  
With one hand he tries to stifle my voice, and with the other he seizes me tightly that I believed I was already overcome.

Don Ottavio:

Perfidious man! ... and finally?

Donna Anna:

At last the sorrow, the horror of the infamous attack increased my energy so that I twisted and bended myself to disengage myself from him.

Don Ottavio:

Oh me! I breathe again!

Donna Anna:

Then I reinforced my screams, I called for help and then he fled.  
I boldly followed him into the street to stop him, as so I became the pursuer instead of the pursued one.

My father runs out, he wants to identify himself, and the wicked man who was stronger than my poor father, completes his horrendous misdeed by killing him.

Now you know who wanted to ravish my honour; who was the traitor who took my father from me.

I ask you for vengeance, your own heart asks for it, and if the anger of a righteous fury languished in you, see again my father's blood covering the ground.

*(Donna Anna and Don Ottavio leave the stage)*

*(Leporello and Don Giovanni enter the scene from different sides)*

**Don Giovanni:**

Oh my Leporello! All is going well!

**Leporello:**

Oh my Don Giovanni! All is not going well!

**Don Giovanni:**

Why what happened?

**Leporello:**

*(Telling his story while constantly interrupting Don Giovanni, by answering his own questions)*

Well, I went home with all those people as you ordered me.

*(Don Giovanni wants to react)*

And through useless chatting and lying, that I learned so well from... you,

*(Don Giovanni wants to react)*

I entertained them!

I spoke to Masetto about the biggest load of nonsense, just to keep his mind occupied! *(Don Giovanni wants to react)*

I made everyone drinks... so later on they were all drunk!

*(Don Giovanni wants to react)*

Some were singing, some were joking and others were still drinking!

And at the peak of it all, you will never guess who rocked up there...

*(Don Giovanni wants to react)*

Zerlina!

But do you know who came with her? ...

*(Don Giovanni wants to react)*

Elvira!

She said everything bad about you that she could think of, *(Don Giovanni wants to react)* and just as I thought she was done, she started screaming again.

*(Don Giovanni wants to react)*

So after she had gotten it all off her chest, I gently led her outside into the garden, and just as she stepped outside, I quickly locked the door and ran off.

*(Laughing)*

I left her on the street all alone.

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Pleased with Leporello)*

Bravo!

Well done!

Triple well done Leporello!

It could not have gone better!

You've started it, and I know how to finish it!

I want to amuse those girls until the night comes!

**8. “Fin ch’han dal vino” - Don Giovanni**

Don Giovanni:

*(To Leporello)*

While their heads are still hot from the wine, have them prepare for a great celebration.

If you find some girls in the square, try to bring them with you.

Let the dancing be without any order.

Make them all dance minuets, follias, allemandes, while I make love to the rest in the corner.

Ah! By tomorrow morning you will have to increase the list by ten names or so.

*(Don Giovanni leaves the scene with Leporello following)*

*(Masetto enters the scene with Zerlina trying to catch up to him)*

**Zerlina:**

*(Chasing Masetto onto stage and trying to touch him)*

Masetto... Listen for a moment... Masetto Please!

**Masetto:**

Don't touch me!

**Zerlina:**

Why?

**Masetto:**

*(Turning to her)*

Why? How can you even ask me that? You are a faithless woman Zerlina!

**Zerlina:**

*(Shouting at him)*

Ah No! Keep quite, you cruel man! I do not deserve such bad treatment from you!

**Masetto:**

*(Shouting back at her)*

What?! And you still have the nerve to make excuses after you abandoned me on the day of our wedding! You were alone with another man Zerlina, *(Stressing each word)* on the day of our wedding!

**Zerlina:**

*(Changes to innocence)*

But I am not to blame! I was tricked by him! You don't believe me? Come here, get it off your chest! Kill me, do whatever you want with me, but Masetto... Then just make peace with me...

**9. "Batti, batti" - Zerlina**

Zerlina:

*(To Masetto)*

Beat, beat, oh handsome Masetto, your poor Zerlina.

I will be here like a little lamb, waiting for your blows.

I'll let you tear out my hair, I'll let you gouge out my eyes and your happy hands I will be able to kiss.

Ah, I see it, you don't have the heart!

Let's make peace my beloved!

Let us spend night and day in joy and happiness.

**Masetto:**

*(In a trance of seduction)*

Just look how she seduced me...

*(To the audience)*

Guys, we are really the weak ones up here *(pointing to his head)*!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Heard from off-stage)*

Leporello! Is everything ready for the party tonight?!

**Zerlina:**

*(Anguishes)*

Ah! Masetto! Did you hear that?! Don Giovanni is coming!

**Masetto:**

*(Calm about the situation)*

Yes, so what?! Let him come.

**Zerlina:**

*(To herself and looking for a hiding place)*

If only I had a place to hide.

**Masetto:**

*(Confused)*

Why are you so scared?! Why are you so pale?!

*(Understands the situation)*

Ah! I get it you little bitch!

You are afraid that I will understand exactly what happened between the two of you!

**10a. “Presto presto...” - Masetto, Zerlina**

Masetto:

Quickly, quickly... before he comes I want to get off to one side...

Here is a niche...

I will stay hidden here quietly.

Zerlina:

Listen, listen...

Where are you going?

Ah don't hide o Masetto!

If he finds you, poor boy... You don't know what he can do.

Masetto:

Let him do and say what he wants.

Zerlina:

Ah, words are of no use...

Masetto:

Speak up and stay here.

Zerlina:

What a whim he has in his head!

That ungrateful man, that cruel man wants to do something rash today.

Masetto:

*(To himself)*

I'll find out if she is faithful to me and how the matter went between her and Don Giovanni.

*(Masetto hides)*

**Zerlina:**

Maybe if I hide here, here won't see me!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Enters the scene)*

My lovely Zerlina, I have already seen you, don't run away. Stay with me for a while...  
Come here for a moment... I want to make you happy!

*(Masetto reveals himself)*

**Don Giovanni:**

*(surprised)*

Masetto?!

**Masetto:**

*(Aggressive)*

Yes, it's me... Masetto! *(Recreating Don Giovanni's voice)*

**Don Giovanni:**

Why are you hiding there? Your beautiful Zerlina cannot be without you much longer!  
*(Bringing her closer to Masetto)* Will you care to join me inside for the party? Let's go dance  
with the others.

*(Donna Anna, Don Ottavio and Donna Elvira enter the scene wearing masks and starts  
dancing to the music)*

**10b. "Riposate, vezzose ragazze!" - Don Giovanni, Leporello, Masetto,  
Zerlina**

Don Giovanni:

Rest charming girls.

Leporello:

Refresh yourselves, handsome young men!

Don Giovanni, Leporello:

You will soon again be behaving madly, you will soon joke and dance again.

Don Giovanni:

Hey! Coffee!

Leporello:

Chocolate!

Masetto:

Ah! Zerlina, be careful!

Don Giovanni:

Sherbets!

Leporello:

Sweets!

Zerlina, Masetto:

This scene begins too madly; it might end in bitterness.

Don Giovanni:

You are truly beautiful, radiant Zerlina!

Zerlina:

How kind of you.

Masetto:

The rascal girl is enjoying herself.

Leporello:

You're truly dear Giannotta, Sandrina!

Masetto:

Just touch her, Giovanni, and I'll make your head fall off!

Zerlina:

Masetto seems to be out of his mind.



This affair is becoming ugly.

Don Giovanni, Leporello:

Masetto seems to be out of his mind.

We must put our brains at use.

Masetto:

Touch! Ah! You rogue!

You want to make me despair.

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Approaching Donna Elvira, Donna Anna and Don Ottavio standing a group)*

Thank you so much for joining us dear friends.

**Donna Anna:**

*(says on behalf of the group)*

We are so thankful for your generosity.

**Don Giovanni:**

*(to Leporello)*

Why has the music stopped?

*(to the piano or ensemble)*

Music!

**10c. “Da bravi, via, ballate...” - Leporello, Donna Elvira, Donna Anna,  
Don Ottavio, Don Giovanni, Masetto, Zerlina**

Leporello:

Come everyone, dance like good fellows.

Donna Elvira:

*(To Donna Anna)*

That is the peasant girl.

Donna Anna:

I'm dying!

Don Ottavio:

Pretend.

Don Giovanni, Leporello:

It's truly going well!

Don Giovanni

*(To Leporello)*

Keep Masetto at bay.

*(To Zerlina)*

I am your partner Zerlina, come over here...

Leporello:

*(To Masetto)*

You're not dancing poor fellow?

Come on dear Masetto, let's do what the others are doing.

Masetto:

No! I don't want to dance.

Leporello:

Hey! Dance my friend.

Masetto:

No!

Donna Anna:

*(To Donna Elvira)*

I can't endure this any longer!

Don Ottavio:

Pretend for pity's sake.

Don Giovanni:

*(To Zerlina)*

Come with me, my life...

Masetto:

Let go of me... ah... no, Zerlina!

Zerlina:

Oh gods! I'm betrayed!

Leporello:

*(To himself)*

A disaster is born.

Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio:

By his own initiative that wicked man goes into the snare.

Zerlina:

*(from off-stage)*

People! ... Help! ...

Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio:

Let us help the innocent girl! ...

Masetto:

Ah, Zerlina!

Zerlina:

Scoundrel!

Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio:

Now she is crying out from that side.

Ah! Let us knock down the door.

Zerlina:

Help me, or I am dead!

Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio, Masetto:

We are here to defend you!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Taking Leporello by the arm and throwing him down to centre stage holding him at gunpoint)*

Here is the idiot who offended you!

I say we punish him to death!

**Leporello:**

*(Shocked)*

What are you doing?!

**Ottavio:**

*(drawing his pistol)*

I don't think so!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(All three pull off their masks)*

Donna Elvira? Don Ottavio? Donna Anna?

**Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, Masetto:**

*(Aggressive)*

Traitor! We know of everything you have done!

**10d. "Trema, trema..." - Tutti**

Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, Masetto:

Tremble, oh scoundrel.

The entire world will soon know of your horrendous and black misdeeds and fierce cruelty.

Listen to the thundering of vengeance that whistles all around you.

Its thunderbolt will fall over your head on this day.

Don Giovanni, Leporello:

My/his head is confused.

I don't know anymore what I am/ (he is) doing and a horrible tempest, oh God, is menacing me/him.

But I/ he does not lack courage.

I/he won't lose my/his way or get confused.

Even if the world should fall down, nothing ever frightens me/him.

*(Leporello and Don Giovanni is left alone on the scene)*

**Leporello:**

*(To Don Giovanni)*

That's it!

I'm leaving!

I don't want to work for you ANY MORE!

**Don Giovanni:**

Come on, you buffoon, don't annoy me.

**Leporello:**

No! I said I am leaving!

**Don Giovanni:**

Listen to me my friend... What did I do?

**Leporello:**

*(sarcastic)*

Oh nothing at all... besides... you almost killed me!

**Don Giovanni:**

Oh come on it was only a joke.

**Leporello:**

Yes, and I am not joking!

I WANT TO LEAVE!

*(Turns around to leave)*

**Don Giovanni:**

Leporello come here.

Let me fix this.

Take this.

*(Holds out money to him)*

R400-00 enough?

**Leporello:**

*(Hesitates a while then takes the money)*

Ok, listen... I will accept it this one time, but don't get used to seducing me with money like you seduce women.

**Don Giovanni:**

Let's not talk about this any more ok?

Do you have the courage to do what I tell you?

**Leporello:**

As long as we forget about women...

**Don Giovanni:**

Forget about women?

*(Laughing)*

You're a madman!

You know that women are more important to me that the food I eat and the air I breath.

Whoever is faithful to only one woman, is being so cruel to the rest of them.

**Leporello:**

Ok whatever you say.

Now then, what do you want?

**Don Giovanni:**

Have you seen Donna Elvira's personal assistant?

**Leporello:**

No why?

**Don Giovanni:**

You have never seen such a beautiful creature Leporello.

I want to try my luck with her, and I thought that since it is already evening, I can better her appetite and present myself in your clothes.

**Leporello:**

In my clothes?

Why can't she see you in your own clothes?

**Don Giovanni:**

My noble cloths have little credit with people of her class

*(Starts taking off his jacket)*

Hurry, Come on!

**Leporello:**

Sir, this is just a bit crazy...

**Don Giovanni:**

Oh stop complaining.

Look! There she is *(pointing into the audience)*.

Fate is on my side Leporello!

I am going to go to her.

I want to sing her a serenade!

*(Don Giovanni goes down into the audience and kneels at a lady's feet)*

**11. "Deh! vieni alla finestra" - Don Giovanni**

**Don Giovanni:**

Ah! Come to the window, oh my treasure.

Ah! Come to console my weeping.

If you refuse to give me some comfort, I want to die before your eyes.

You who have a mouth sweeter than honey, you who have sugar in the core of your heart, don't be cruel to me, my jewel.

Let yourself at least be seen, my beautiful love!

*(While the aria is being sung from the audience, Donna Elvira runs onto stage toward Leporello disguised as Don Giovanni. They talk a while and run off the stage together)*

*(Masetto enters the scene and Don Giovanni remains in the audience)*

**Masetto:**

*(Aggressive)*

I need to find that idiot!

*(Looks into the audience)*

Hey! Is someone there? Who goes there?

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Moving back onto stage)*

Masetto, is that you?

**Masetto:**

*(Seeing Don Giovanni disguised as Leporello)*

Yes, it is! Who are you?

*(Seeing Don Giovanni clearly)*

Oh Leporello! Servant to that useless cavalier!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Sarcastic)*

Yes, of that rascal.

**Masetto:**

*(Aggressive)*

Do you know where he is? I am looking for him and I want to kill him!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Trying to hide his face)*

Wonderful Masetto! Ok, I will join you!

What weapons do you have?



**Masetto:**

*(Revealing a pistol and a knife)*

I have this pistol and this knife. Do you think it's enough?

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Taking the weapons from Masetto's hands)*

Oh! It's enough all right.

*(Raises the back ends of both the weapons)*

Now take this!

This is for the pistol.

*(Hits him with the back end of the pistol)*

And this if for the knife.

*(Hits him with the back end of the knife)*

*(Runs of the scene)*

**Masetto:**

*(Painful and crying)*

Ah! My head, My Chest!

Ah! My shoulders!

**Zerlina:**

*(enters from side stage)*

Masetto...

*(Running toward him in shock)*

What happened?

**Masetto:**

Leporello or some scoundrel that looks like him, hit me with my own weapons!

**Zerlina:**

*(Calming him)*

Didn't I tell you that your insane jealousy would bring you to this bad end someday?

Come on my love. I will cure you.

*(She helps the injured Masetto off stage)*

*(Donna Elvira and Leporello disguised as Don Giovanni enter the scene)*

**Leporello:**

*(To Donna Elvira)*

Come on my dear, we should be safe here in Donna Anna's house.

*(Looks off-stage)*

Oh no! I see people with lights approaching! Stay here. I want to see how far they are from here.

*(He runs off stage)*

**Donna Elvira:**

No! Don't leave me! Giovanni!

**12. Sextet - Donna Elvira, Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, Masetto, Leporello**

Donna Elvira:

I feel my heart beating, alone in this dark place and I am assailed by such a fright, that I feel as if I am dying.

Leporello:

The more I look for this wretched door, the less I find it.

Gently now, gently now, I've found it!

Here is my chance to escape.

Don Ottavio:

Dry your eyes, my love and give rest to your grief.

By now your father's spirit will be distressed by your suffering.

Donna Anna:

Allow my tears at least to be a small comfort for my suffering.

Only death can end my weeping.

Donna Elvira:

Ah! Where is my betrothed man.

Leporello:

If she finds me I am lost.

I see a door there. Quietly I must leave.

Donna Elvira:

I see a door there. Quietly I must leave.

Zerlina, Masetto:

Stop, rogue! Where are you going?

Donna Anna, Don Ottavio:

Here is the felon... how did you get here?

Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, Masetto:

Ah! May he die, the wicked man who betrayed me.

Donna Elvira:

He is my husband... mercy!

Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, Masetto:

Is it Donna Elvira whom I see? Hardly can I believe it...

Donna Elvira:

Mercy!

Donna Anna, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, Masetto:

No, he will die.

Leporello:

Pardon, pardon, my lords.

I am not he, she is mistaken...

Let me live for pity's sake...

Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, Masetto:

Gods! Leporello!

What deceit is this!

I am dumbfounded!

What will happen?

Leporello:

A thousand troubled thoughts are whirling through my head.

If I save myself from such a tempest it is a miracle indeed.

Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Don Ottavio, Zerlina, Masetto:

A thousand troubled thoughts are whirling through my head.

What day, o stars, is this!

What unexpected new events!

*(Donna Anna runs off stage crying)*

**Zerlina:**

*(To Leporello)*

So you are the one who brutally hurt my Masetto?

**Donna Elvira:**

*(To Leporello)*

You deceived me, you scoundrel! You passed yourself off to be Don Giovanni!

**Don Ottavio:**

*(To Leporello)*

So you came here in Don Giovanni's clothes to carry out a crime of some sort?

**Leporello:**

*(Confused and not sure what to say)*

Ah! Please... have some mercy... You are right... all of you... but... I am not guilty... my master stole my... innocence...

*(He flees from the stage and the others run after him, leaving Don Ottavio alone on stage)*

**Don Ottavio:**

*(To the audience)*

My friends, after Leporello's excuses, we can no longer doubt that Don Giovanni is the murderer of Donna Anna's father! In a few moments I will avenge all who have suffered under the treacherous ways of Don Giovanni as you demand duty, compassion and love.

**13. "Il mio tesoro" - Don Ottavio**

Don Ottavio:

*(To the audience)*

Meanwhile, go and console my treasure and seek to dry the tears from her lovely eyes.

Tell her that I am going to avenge her wrongs, that I only wish to return as a herald of slaughter and death.

*(Don Ottavio leaves the scene)*

*(Leporello and Don Giovanni enter from different sides of the stage)*

**Leporello:**

*(Looking around him. Scared)*

I don't know why he wants to meet me in a cemetery.

**Don Giovanni:**

Leporello?

**Leporello:**

*(Looking around him)*

Who's calling me?

**Don Giovanni:**

Don't you know your master?

**Leporello:**

*(To the audience)*

If only I didn't know him.

**Don Giovanni:**

Leporello, I have several little stories for you, but I can't tell them all to you now.  
I need to tell the most intriguing one!

**Leporello:**

About a woman?

**Don Giovanni:**

Well obviously, what else?  
Anyway, I saw this beautiful young girl on the street.  
So I went up to her and took her by her hand...  
She wanted to flee from me, not that I would know why, but I spoke with her for a while...  
It turns out that she had mistaken me for someone else...  
Do you know who?

**Leporello:**

No I don't.

**Don Giovanni:**

For you!  
She started caressing me and suddenly she embraced me.  
(*mimicking her voice*)  
"Oh, my dear Leporello"  
And then it hit me!  
She was one of your lovely play things!

**Leporello:**

And you tell me this story without even blinking!  
What if that woman had been my wife?!

**Don Giovanni:**

(*Laughing loudly*)  
Even better!

### 13.a “Di rider...” - Commendatore

Commendatore:

You will cease laughing before dawn.

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Looking around him)*

Who spoke?

**Leporello:**

*(Scared)*

Ah! It's a soul from another world!

Maybe it knows you!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Aggressive)*

Keep quite you fool!

*(Looking around him)*

Who goes there?

### 13.b “Ribaldo audace!...” - Commendatore

Commendatore:

Audacious scoundrel! Leave the dead in peace.

**Leporello:**

*(Scared)*

I told you so...

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Brushing it off)*

O come on.

Maybe it's just someone mocking us!

*(Noticing the Commendatore's stature)*

Hey! Isn't that the Commendatore's statue?

Read the inscription!

**Leporello:**

Sorry, but I can't read by moonlight...

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Screaming to Leporello)*

READ!

**Leporello:**

*(Stuttering out of fear)*

"I here wait for vengeance upon the man who sent me to my death."

*(Fearful)*

Did you hear that?

Oh my God!

I'm trembling!

**Don Giovanni:**

O you're so foolish!

Tell him I am expecting him at dinner tonight.

**Leporello:**

You're mad!

Oh God!

Look at the evil glances he's giving us...

It seems alive...

he wants to speak!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Shouting and Showing Leporello his gun)*

Tell him or I will kill you right here!

**Leporello:**

*(Fearful towards Don Giovanni)*

No please sir!



I will tell him...

#### 14. “O statua gentilissima...” - Don Giovanni, Leporello

Leporello:

*(To Commendatore)*

Oh most kind statue of the Commendatore

*(To Don Giovanni)*

Master my heart is trembling.

I cannot finish what I wanted to tell the statue.

Don Giovanni:

Finish it, or I'll run you through my sword.

*(To himself)*

What a pleasure and amusement it is for me to make him tremble.

Leporello:

*(To himself)*

What a nuisance, what a caprice!

I feel myself freezing!

*(To Commendatore)*

Oh most kind statue, although you are made of marble...

*(To Don Giovanni)*

Master... look... how it continues to look at us.

Don Giovanni:

Die!

Leporello:

No, No, wait...

*(To Commendatore)*

Sir, my master... listen carefully... not I... would like to have supper with you.

*(Commendatore bows his head)*

Ah! Ah! What scene is this!

Oh heaven! It bowed its head!

Don Giovanni:

Go on, you are a buffoon.

Leporello:

Look again, master...

Don Giovanni:

And what should I look at?

Leporello:

With his marble head he goes like this... like this...

Don Giovanni:

*(To Commendatore)*

Speak, if you can.

Will you come to supper?

Commendatore:

Yes.

Leporello:

I can hardly move, I lack, oh gods, the energy!

For pity's sake let us leave, let's go away from here.

Don Giovanni:

This scene is truly bizarre!

Will the good old man come to supper?

Let us go away from here to prepare for it.

*(They leave the scene)*

*(Donna Anna and Don Ottavio enter the scene)*

**Don Ottavio:**

*(Follows Anna on stage)*

My love, please just calm yourself.

We will soon be avenged

**Donna Anna:**

But my father... Oh God!

**Don Ottavio:**

*(Trying to calm her)*

Breathe easy my dearest.

*(Attempts to propose marriage to her)*

You will have a sweet reward for your bitter loss tomorrow.

If you wish, my heart, my hand and my love...

**Donna Anna:**

*(Interrupts him)*

Oh God! What are you trying to say in these sad times?

**Don Ottavio:**

*(Shocked)*

What! You want to increase my suffering with your delays?

You are cruel!

**15. “Crudele...Non mi dir...” - Donna Anna**

Donna Anna:

Cruel?

Ah no my beloved!

It displeases me too much to put out of your reach a blessing that our souls have desired for so long.

But the world... Oh God!

Don't tempt the faithfulness of my sensitive heart!

Love speaks to me sufficiently in your favour.

Don't tell me my love that I am cruel with you.  
You know well how much I loved you, you know my loyalty.  
Calm your torment if you don't wish that I die of grief.  
Maybe someday, heaven will feel pity for me again.

*(Anna Leaves the scene with Ottavio following)*

*(Don Giovanni enters the scene with Leporello following him)*

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Sighing)*

What a day!

Leporello, I am so hungry!

What have you arranged for dinner tonight?

I hope it's a huge feast!

**Leporello:**

Whatever it is, I hope you leave something for me...

*(Donna Elvira enters from the opposite side of the stage)*

**Donna Elvira:**

*(Firm)*

Ok Giovanni, I am going to make one last test of my love to you!

I will try and forget everything you have done to me!

*(Embracing Don Giovanni)*

My soul doesn't want to be rewarded for its loyalty!

**Leporello:**

*(Sarcastic and to the audience)*

Ah! She almost brings me to tears

**Donna Elvira:**

*(Pleading with Don Giovanni)*

I only ask that you change your way of living.

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Laughing loudly and applauding her)*

I change my way of living?

Brava!

**Donna Elvira:**

*(Crying and shouting)*

You are an evil-hearted man!

*(Runs off stage)*

**Leporello:**

*(To the audience, no longer sarcastic)*

If he is not moved by her grief, then he either has a heart of stone, or no heart at all.

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Arms in the air and shouting)*

Long live the woman!

Long live the good wine!

The soul and glory of humanity!

**Donna Elvira:**

*(Screaming from off-stage)*

Ah!

**Leporello:**

*(scared)*

Why is she screaming?

**Don Giovanni:**

*(ordering Leporello)*

Go and see what happened!

*(Leporello leaves to the side Elvira left)*

**Leporello:**

*(Screaming from off-stage)*

Ah!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(impatient)*

Leporello, what is it?

**Leporello:**

*(Re-enters the scene. Stutters out of fear)*

The man... of... stone... the man...

Ah, sir... I'm freezing...

**Don Giovanni:**

*(impatient still)*

I don't understand you Leporello!

Are you going insane?

*(A loud knock is heard from off-stage)*

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Ordering Leporello)*

Leporello, someone is knocking.

Open the door.

**Leporello:**

*(Afraid and moving towards Giovanni to plead with him)*

But sir... Please!

**Don Giovanni:**

*(Shouting at the top of his voice)*

I said Open!

*(Falls down to the floor out of fear)*

Ag tog! As 'n mens iets gedoen wil hê, doen dit dan maar self!

*(Opens for Commendatore to enter)*

**16a “Don Giovanni...” - Commendatore, Don Giovanni, Leporello, Chorus of demons**

Commendatore:

Don Giovanni, you have invited me to dine with you, and I have come.

Don Giovanni:

I wouldn't have ever believed it, but I will do what I can.

Leporello, have another supper brought here at once.

Leporello:

Ah! Sir... We're all dead...

Don Giovanni:

Go, I say!

Commendatore:

Stop a moment.

He who feeds on celestial food does not feed on the food of mortals.

Other reasons, more weighty than these, another desire has guided me to come here below.

Leporello:

I seem to be having a fever...and I can no longer stop my limbs from shaking.

Don Giovanni:

Speak then, what do you ask, what do you want?

Commendatore:

I will speak, you listen, I don't have more time.

Don Giovanni:

Speak, I am listening to you.

Commendatore:

You invited me to supper.

You know your duty now.

Answer me: Will you come to dine with me?

Leporello:

Alas! Time he hasn't... excuse me.

Don Giovanni:

I will never be accused of the sin of cowardice.

Commendatore:

Decide!

Don Giovanni:

I have already decided.

Commendatore:

Will you come?

Leporello:

Say no!

Don Giovanni:

My heart is steady in my breast: I have no fear, I will come.

Commendatore:

Give me your hand as token.

Don Giovanni:

Here it is... Oh! ...

Commendatore:

What's the matter with you?

Don Giovanni:

What chill is this?



Commendatore:

Repent, reform your life: It's the last moment.

Don Giovanni:

No, no, I won't repent, get away from me.

Commendatore:

Repent, you scoundrel.

Don Giovanni:

No you silly old man.

Commendatore:

Repent.

Don Giovanni:

No.

Commendatore:

Yes.

Ah! There's no more time left for you!

Don Giovanni:

By what unusual shiver...I feel... assailing me... the spirits...

From where come out those whirlwinds of fire full of horror!

Chorus:

Everything that is happening to you is little for the sins you committed!

Come, there is a pain even worse.

Don Giovanni:

Who is lacerating my soul!

Who is tearing my bowels!

What torment!

Oh! What frenzy!

What hell!

What terror!

Leporello:

What desperate grimace!

What gestures of a damned man!

What screams!

What cries of pain!

How it terrifies me!

*(The chorus runs off stage, leaving the Commendatore standing over Don Giovanni's dead body with Leporello crying to the side)*

*(The stage blacks out for Commendatore, Don Giovanni and Leporello to leave)*

*(Leporello re-enters, with all the other characters following him besides Don Giovanni)*

**Leporello:**

*(Trying to get away from them)*

I told you everything that happened! He is not longer with us!

**Ottavio:**

*(To Anna)*

My love, now that we have all been avenged by heaven, will you please allow me to marry you?

**Anna:**

*(To Ottavio)*

Oh my dear, please give a me another year to just get over the relief of my heart!

**Elvira:**

*(To herself and the audience)*

I'm going to enter a convent and become a nun!

**Masetto:**

*(To Zerlina)*

My lovely Zerlina, I am no cavalier, but let's go home!

**Zerlina:**

*(To Masetto)*

Come on my love, I have a wonderful dinner waiting for us!

**Leporello:**

*(To himself and the audience)*

And I am going to the hotel to find myself another master.

*(Sighing to the audience)*

You see, wicked people die the same way that they live.

**16b “Questo è il fin...” - Tutti (Excluding Don Giovanni)**

Donna Anna, Donna Elvira, Zerlina, Don Ottavio, Leporello, Masetto:

This is the end of who does evil!

And wicked people will die just as they lived.

*(The End)*

± 78 min of music

± 17 min of dialogue

± 95 min in total.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The original *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* had a complete production time of 90 minuets, nine minuets shorter than my new reduction. Mozart's original opera has a production time of over three hours in length.

## ***Chapter 6: Conclusion***

This study explored the concept of *Opera Alla Breve* with specific reference to the current South African adaption of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* as fashioned by *Opera in Darling*. It traced my personal involvement with the production as a participant observer, it pointed out the weak points in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto compared to Da Ponte's original libretto as well as explored the applicability of the authenticity debate on Mozart and Da Ponte's work. General literature in the field of *Opera Alla Breve* and its applicability to the authenticity debate is inadequate. Therefore, this study aimed to answer the following questions.

1. What tribulations did I experience with the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*?
2. What and where are the differences between Da Ponte's original *Don Giovanni* libretto and the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto?
3. Is it feasible to apply the authenticity debate in an attempt to re-reduce the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto to a "more-authentic" state of existence?

### **Empirical findings**

1. What tribulations did I experience with the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*?

As mentioned in my conclusion to chapter two, I found three elements of discomfort. Firstly, the interchanging of vocal lines between characters. Secondly, shortage of technical assistance whilst on tour with the production. Thirdly, and focal point to this study, was the manner in which the production was reduced from the original. The change in plot and the extreme comical elements that were introduced, resulted in a "sitcom-like" production that lead to a warped image of the high levels of socially applicability that the plot of Don Juan has to offer to our audiences under the paradigm of popular culture.

2. What and where are the differences between Da Ponte's original *Don Giovanni* libretto and the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto?

The empirical findings to this question is chapter specific. I would like to refer the reader back to chapter three for a detailed answer to this question, however in summary:

Considering the discussion as presented in chapter three of this thesis, there are up to six major social issues that are present in Da Ponte's libretto (murder, attempt to murder, fidelity, bribery, misuse of power and two-faced friendship) that are also an integral part of our daily lives in contemporary South Africa, which the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto dispenses with in its entirety. The level of social applicability is the main difference between the two librettos.

3. Is it feasible to apply the authenticity debate in an attempt to re-reduce the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto to a "more-authentic" state of existence?

This question has gathered arguments for and against it which I will summarize here. There are two overarching arguments that do not support the idea of an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto. The first argument resided within the authenticity debate.

The debate surrounding authenticity in Western art music has different viewpoints from many different music scholars. The first such scholar is Will Crutchfield. He argues that the term authenticity in Western art music does not necessarily relate to an "original state" of a given work, but rather to the individual within the performance. He believes that if one would perform any work with passion and energy it could be seen as authentic, as this was the biggest expectation that was extended to the composer's performers. He continues by arguing that the word "authenticity" is derived from the word "authority". Through this he explains that the only person with authority in a performance is the performer himself, making any performance authentic by nature (Kenyon, 1988: 25). Through the understanding of Crutchfield's theories, an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto will not be feasible as the performer has the authority on stage to read any libretto with passion and energy making the performance authentic, however considering the lack of social applicability in the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, I strongly disagree with his argument as social applicability is the cornerstone *Don Giovanni's* relevance today.

The second such scholar is Richard Taruskin. One of many opinions surrounding authenticity in Western art music applies to the use of *urtext* materials. *Urtext* vocal scores are (from personal experience) a major benchmark for authentic performance practice, however Taruskin argues that these editions are filled with printed errors (Taruskin, 1995: 71). Although Taruskin only supplies us with one opinion, if this is the case (in the absence of a personal in-depth study of the *Don Giovanni Urtext*), it cannot be feasible to pursue and

authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, if one grounds the performed music within the *urtext* editions.

The third relevant musicologist is Peter Kivy. His argument in turn is based on the understanding of the composer's original intentions. He explains that once one has a thorough understanding of the composer's original intentions for a given piece, it is important that the piece be re-understood under our contemporary times, to ensure the pieces' contemporary applicability (Kivy, 1995: 45). Under this viewpoint the execution of an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto will once again not be feasible, as the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto does exactly that – re-understand Da Ponte's intentions to suit contemporary applicability, at the cost of social applicability.

Although this is understood, I do however feel that this approach by Kivy towards authenticity in Western art music and in opera is exactly where my personal struggle with *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* begins. Although it is well-received by staging directors and audience members to re-interpret a work to our contemporary time to heighten its social relevance, the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* is predominantly doing the opposite. By diminishing the social relevance of Da Ponte's original *Don Giovanni* libretto, the social applicability becomes lost.

The last argument was gathered from local HIPPP practitioners Rebecca Sandmeier and Erik Dippenaar. Their arguments are both seen through the lens of performance. With the singing style of the Mozartean period changing after the industrial revolution along with the high cost of production for Mozartean orchestral instruments, they both concur that it can never fully be possible, from a performance aspect, to deliver an authentic *Don Giovanni*. Furthermore, they question an "authentic" *Don Giovanni* altogether, as they argue that composers in the eighteenth century were mostly regarded as craftsman and not always seen as artists. Their music and storylines were changed for each performance at the aristocracy's will. They explained that it was only in the nineteenth century that works were fully completed by composers that were seen as artists, resulting in the true movement of authenticity in Western art music and in opera (Sandmeier, 2016) (Dippenaar, 2016). According to these theories, an argument towards an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto is not truly valid, as there rests a question mark over the concept of "authenticity", within the classical music period altogether.

On the contrary, it might be feasible to re-reduce *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* to a more authentic state if one grounds its supporting argument within the opinion of other academia discussed in chapter four.

Firstly, according to Dippenaar, it might be possible to do so if one decides on a specific date that one would want to use as a point of reference for an authentic libretto. In the case of *Don Giovanni*, the choice will then be between the Prague or Vienna première of the opera, as each had its own libretto. This discussion does come with many different aspects that need to be understood before a decision can be made. The difference between the two voices that Mozart used as Don Ottavio, affected the music and the libretto that was sung at each respective première. A decision of which one of the two to use as an “authentic” reference point, must be grounded within the availability of voices to one’s disposal. Furthermore, the choice on which version to pursue, foregrounds the question regarding the balance of comical versus serious elements. If the Prague version is chosen, the production could be much more comically inclined than if the Vienna version were to be chosen. This is because of the difference between the inserted and omitted musical numbers of the Prague and Vienna versions.

Secondly, Sandmeier thought it would be a shame if some of the subtleties and nuances in Da Ponte’s libretto (that arise from Mozart’s *recitativi*) were lost if they were to be replaced with dialogue. According to Sandmeier, it might be possible to render an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, should one make a direct translation of Da Ponte’s original libretto. Although this might capture the subtle nuances in the scenes that are used, many of the subtleties will be lost by default as the production is reduced to half the running time of Mozart’s original work.

The penultimate argument toward the re-reduction of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, resides in the sociologically related field of “popular culture”.

Popular culture dictates the manner in which people accept or reject trends in the cultural industry. In contemporary times popular culture asks for the rejection of sociological issues in staged works (Mukerji & Schudon, 1986: 57). Being a diverging pole to authenticity in staged works at present, it would be feasible to pursue an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto, as it is the discussion of social issues surrounding murder, sex, jealousy, fidelity and bribery that gives *Don Giovanni*, and many other operas for that matter, the right to existence.

Lastly, and arguably my most important motivation: My yearning to execute an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto is grounded within my beliefs as an artist. Finding a suitable outlet for emotional and social challenges one faces on a daily basis, is not always possible, given our contemporary culture that suppress these issues. It is my personal belief and artistic drive to ensure that opera says what society does not allow us to say and for this reason an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto cannot be argued against.

### **Theoretical implications**

Through this study it has become apparent that my views on an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* libretto are not necessarily fully supported by the academic canon and local scholars in the field of music academia. Although this is the case, there are conductors abroad who are currently performing and recording Mozart's operas in an "authentic" manner. One such scholar is Teodor Currentzis who recently made recordings of all three Mozart-Da Ponte operas with the use of Mozartean orchestral instruments, singers singing in Mozartean "style" while using the "correct" ornamentation. These recordings employ no musical cuts and only makes use of music from the Prague première of *Don Giovanni*. Through the outcome of this study, performers of recordings like these might be informed that it could possibly be altered to suite a more socially relevant sphere or they should work toward authentic performances and recordings grounded within their personal artistic beliefs.

### **Recommendation for future research**

As the *Opera Alla Breve* research in this study is solely concentrated on the music of Mozart with specific reference to his opera *Don Giovanni*, it therefore focused on the concept of authenticity in Western art music within the eighteenth century. As became clear though this study, authenticity in opera is for the most part a nineteenth century phenomenon. For this reason, further case studies are needed to research the applicability of the authenticity debate on the *Alla Breve* form of a Verdi, Puccini or even Britten opera, to name but a few examples.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the time (as a performer) I spent trying to interpret Mozart's *Don Giovanni*'s music and Da Ponte's libretto in a manner that would ring authentic to their intentions, this study ultimately concludes that although the bulk of the Western art music academic canon suggests that it does not seem to be feasible to pursue an authentic *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*



libretto, anthropology and my personal artistic beliefs, justifies this pursuit to an unarguable degree.

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## *Addenda*

### **Structured interview with Mr. Alexander Kuchinka**

#### **1) Warum Alla Breve? Was ist der Grund für seine Schöpfung?**

*Es war ein Auftragswerk. Die Grundidee - die Oper auf ihre Highlights zu reduzieren und mit kleiner Besetzung und möglichst sparsamen Mitteln eine szenisch-konzertante Kurzfassung zu erarbeiten - kam von Preiser Records, einer traditionsreichen Wiener Schallplatten- bzw. CD-Firma.*

#### **2) Welche Prozess haben Sie gefolgt, führen zu *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*, wie wir es heute kennen?**

*Zuerst kam die Auswahl der Musikstücke und davon ausgehend die Entscheidung, welche Handlungselemente gezeigt werden können und welche erzählt werden müssen. So bin ich schnell auf Leoporello als Erzählerfigur gekommen und alle anderen Dialoganteile haben sich daraus ergeben.*

#### **3) Es gibt große Streitigkeiten darüber, ob *Don Giovanni* als Opera buffa oder Opera seria kategorisiert werden. Was sind Ihre Gedanken über das? Hatten Sie eine bestimmte eine von dieser zwei Arten im Kopf mit der ersten Reduktion?**

*Es war schnell klar, dass eine respektlose Kürzung und Verkleinerung des Werkes nur mit einem ironischen Augenzwinkern erfolgen kann. So war die pointierte, fast schon ein bisschen parodistische Grundstimmung eine logische Folge. Abgesehen halte ich nichts von allzu strenger Kategorisierung: warum soll in einem Drama nicht auch Komik stecken dürfen und in einer Komödie Dramatik?*

#### **4) Ist die komischen Elemente in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* was Da Ponte zu Anfang gesucht hat für diese Oper nach Ihrer Meinung?**

*Ich habe mich wenig um die Wurzeln der Oper und die Intentionen ihrer Urheber gekümmert, das war für meine Arbeit unerheblich. Ich habe meinem Geschmack vertraut und mit einer Mischung aus Respekt und Frechheit mit dem Material gespielt, das vorliegt. Eine authentische Interpretation war nie beabsichtigt, allerdings wollte ich das Original natürlich auch nicht entstellen oder verunglimpfen. Ziel war eine leichtfüßige Aufbereitung, die Lust auf die Oper in voller Länge macht.*

**5) Wie sind Sie entscheiden auf den Musiknummern in *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* mit der Diskussion um die Legitimität von sicher Nummern wie *Elvira: Mi Tradì* ?**

*Es ging fast ausssschließlich um die Wirkung: was MUSS drin sein, was sind die "Hits"? Und in weiterer Folge auch: was ist in kleiner Besetzung darstellbar und wie ausgewogen ist die Verteilung der Gesangspartien?*

**6) Was machst du übergreifende Gedanken über die *Opera Alla Breve*-Format mit besonderem Bezug auf *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*? Welche positiven und / oder negativen Beiträge fühlen Sie sich dieses Konzept in Oper gemacht und warum?**

*Man tut dem Genre Oper nichts Gutes, wenn man es für heilig erklärt, nur weil es eine alte, traditionsreiche Theaterform ist. Alt und heilig, das bedeutet elitär und ausschließend. Irgendwann waren aber diese Opern frisch und publikumsorientiert - und mit ein bisschen Frechheit kann man genau da ansetzen: die alte Heiligkeit verscheuchen und einem jungen, ungeschulten Publikum vermitteln, was es alles versäumt, wenn es sich nicht mit dieser Kunstform auseinandersetzt. Unterhaltung ist keine Schande, wenn sie mit Haltung angeboten wird.*

**7) Wie wirkt sich *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* haben auf der gesellschaftlichen Relevanz des *Don Giovanni* in unserer heutigen Zeit.**

*Überheblichkeit und Machismo, Verführbarkeit und Eifersucht, Naivität und Berechnung ... viele dieser Themen lassen sich auch heute unmittelbar nachvollziehen und es ist interessant zu sehen, dass man sich zu allen Zeiten damit beschäftigt hat. Es ist immer nur eine Frage der Aufbereitung.*

**8) Haben Sie das Gefühl, dass *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* kann durch die beheizte akademische Debatte von Authentizität in der Musik / Oper beeinflusst werden?**

*Das "Alla breve"-Prinzip war nie als Beitrag zu einer akademischen Debatte gedacht, sondern als pragmatischer Versuch, große Oper auf geschmackvolle Weise in kleinem Rahmen spielbar zu machen. Wenn aus diesem Pragmatismus - den es zu allen Zeiten gegeben hat - irgendwann etwas Akademisches folgt, so soll es mir Recht sein, aber es war natürlich nie beabsichtigt und führt wohl, wie fast alles streng Akademische, früher oder später zu Erstarrung und Missverständnissen. Ich jedenfalls würde sehr lachen, wenn ich miterleben könnte, dass in 50 oder 100 Jahren unsere kleine, freche Idee zu einem Lehrgegenstand an Schulen oder Universitäten geworden ist.*

**9) Haben Sie an einer beliebigen Stelle fühlen sich unwohl mit *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* in einer komischen (Sitcom) Art und Weise dargestellt.**

*Nein. Je düsterer und "seriöser" sich eine Situation darstellt, desto genussvoller ist es, die komischen Seiten darin aufzuspüren.*

**10) Wie wurde *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* vom Publikum in Europa erhalten hat? Haben sie Fragen oder Kommentare zu den komischen Charakter der Produktion vorgenommen?**

*Die Reaktionen des Publikums waren durchwegs gut, aber ich habe natürlich keine empirische Studie gemacht. Aus einzelnen Reaktionen konnte ich entnehmen: für Besucher mit Vorbildung war die Umdeutung und Verkleinerung geschmackvoll und amüsan und für Menschen, die weniger mit Oper zu tun haben, war es eine erfrischend kurzweilige Gelegenheit, diese Oper überhaupt einmal kennenzulernen. - Eine sehr verblüffende Reaktion eines Besuchers war: "Ich habe Don Giovanni schon gesehen/gehört, irgendwann vor zehn Jahren. Aber ich hab mich heute gefragt: was habt ihr denn eigentlich weggelassen? Mir hat nichts gefehlt!"*



## Structured interview with Dr. Lisa Engelbrecht

### **1) What are you're overarching thoughts on the *Opera Alla Breve* format with specific reference to *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* as performed by *Opera in Darling*? What positive and/or negative contributions do you feel this concept has made towards opera in South Africa and why?**

The positive contribution the alla breve format has made and is making within the context of Don Giovanni alla breve here in South Africa is sizable. It has made a big impact especially within classical niche market music festivals in smaller towns such as the Klein Karoo Nationale Kunstefees in Oudtshoorn, and the Darling Music Experience in Darling. Audiences for these festivals often do not get the opportunity to see opera in the big cities and in the alla breve format of a ninety-minute piece without interval and spoken dialogue this is an excellent introduction for new opera goers to the art form.

One may argue that a possible negative impact would be that there is a certain 'dumbing down' of the art form by modernising the context and the dialogue. But as musical standards for the Don Giovanni alla breve were consistently high and recognised as such, I don't believe that this was the case.

### **2) You are currently employed as musical director of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. In the preparation stages of the performance at UCT on the 17th of May 2015, you proposed that after the final death trio, Don Giovanni should stand up after being dragged down to hell, to join the cast in the final scene of the production. What contribution do you think this made to that specific performance?**

I do not believe, in hindsight that reviving Don Giovanni for the last finale scene, was necessarily a good choice. I am not a stage director but I felt something needed to be done to freshen up the ending. As this performance was really a public performance rehearsal, it was good to use this as a platform to try out new things which we did. However other solutions were found subsequently, changing the dialogue and freshening up the choreography, which worked better. In principle I do feel it best not to tamper with the musical numbers by adding voices. In the case of our next production *Die Entführung alla breve*, as there is a large choral component to the work and one only has a cast of five singers, they will be replacing the chorus in these numbers and I think this is a legitimate musical adaptation.

**3) What impact does *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* have on the social relevance of Don Giovanni in our contemporary times in South Africa.**

A Don Giovanniesque figures exist in the modern South Africa in abundance as they have done in all societies and ages past and present. I don't feel the necessity to make the piece socially relevant per se as in choosing singers of a particular ethnic or racial background to play certain roles as this can make the piece contrived and formulaic.

**4) Do you feel that *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* can be influenced through the heated academic debate currently encircling the authenticity in music/opera?**

I do not feel the need to embark on heated academic debate on the relevance of Opera in South Africa because the proof of the pudding is in the eating. There is no doubt that opera is relevant in this country with increasingly more locally flavoured and locally composed opera. Shortly a newly composed cycle of four half hour South African operas will be performed at Artscape entitled 4:30. A production of Franz Lehar's the Merry Widow has been re adapted into an Africanised context, entitled the Merry Widow of Malagawi to great acclaim. Added to this we are producing opera singers in this country that are taking the international world of opera by storm, winning international competitions and singing in major opera houses. This all goes to show that we have academic institutions such as UCT's Opera School that provide world class training enabling students to be employed by local and international companies and most importantly have the freedom of choice as to whether to work locally or abroad.

**5) Did you at any point feel uncomfortable with the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* being portrayed in a comical (almost sitcom-like) manner.**

As musical director of this production I sought as far as possible to avoid interfering in matters non-musical.

## Structured interview with Alfred Legner

### **1)What are you're overarching thoughts on the *Opera Alla Breve* format with specific reference to *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* as performed by *Opera in Darling*? What positive and/or negative contributions do you feel this concept has made towards opera in South Africa and why?**

Our objectives were to:

- give young singers an additional platform.
- create a form of opera which appeals to both younger and older audiences.
- provide musical theatre for music lovers outside the metropolitan areas
- keep production cost to an absolute minimum due to lack of sponsorship
- produce opera which is portable and easy to stage
- overcome the prejudice that it cannot work without an orchestra

I believe we have managed to shift paradigms on all fronts and have created a form of opera which will make a difference. Budgetary pressures and the drying out of sponsorship money force producers, and other festivals and event organisers to follow our lead.

### **2)What impact does *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* have on the social relevance of *Don Giovanni* in our contemporary times in South Africa.**

One critical success driver of our *Don Giovanni alla breve* is the ingenious transfer of the original story line to contemporary South Africa. Murder, rape, abuse of women and problem solution through violence are certainly not alien to our culture. Like in good satire we are reaching our audiences by telling our story with a cheek-in -the- tongue way without belittling the underlying issues.

### **3)Do you feel that *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* can be influenced through the heated academic debate currently encircling the authenticity in music/opera?**

I am not part of this debate. However, I sincerely believe, and the response of our audiences supports me, that our modern interpretation of popular classical works is a truly convincing and

credible way to approach opera. Opera is, for me, a living organism that has to adapt to avoid becoming irrelevant, as long as the quality of the music is not compromised.

**4)Did you at any point feel uncomfortable with the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* being portrayed in a comical (almost sitcom-like) manner.**

Yes, a light hearted approach to opera and not hiding the uncomfortable truth is a balancing act which requires sensitive directorship and good acting skills.

**5)How was *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* received by the audience in Europe? Have they made any comments about the comical nature of the production?**

In London we played in front of audiences who gave us the benefit of doubt. We also had the advantage of the “rainbow nation bonus”. But it was actually the comical nature of the production carried by the quality voices and first rate accompaniment on the piano that took the Tricycle by storm. If there was any criticism it was the comic acting by one or two of the singers which needs to further improve.

## Structured interview with Raimondo van Staden

### **1) What are you're overarching thoughts on the *Opera Alla Breve* format with specific reference to *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* as performed by *Opera in Darling*? What positive and/or negative contributions do you feel this concept has made towards opera in South Africa and why?**

*Opera in Darling's Don Giovanni Alla Breve* created a platform where people of all ages and all demographic groups can enjoy an opera. *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* was presented in a fresh, comical way and was definitely enjoyed, even by people who dislike opera.

I think that this is a great way to introduce opera to the “new-comer” (this was the main idea behind the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*) and it's also a great way of saving money, but I don't think that this should be the new way of performing opera in South Africa. We must remember that we still have a big audience out there who enjoys and appreciates traditional performance methods in opera. Those audience members are the paying public, and to keep opera in South Africa alive, these audience members must be taken into account.

### **2) You are currently employed as staging director of *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*. In the preparation stages of the performance at UCT on the 17th of May 2015, Engelbrecht proposed that after the final death trio, *Don Giovanni* should stand up after being dragged down to hell, to join the cast in the final scene of the production. You removed this from the opera for the company tour to the UK. Why?**

We've seen many far-fetched ideas in opera, but *Don Giovanni* returning from the dead and joining the rest of the cast in the presto finale was just something I couldn't let by. At first it was funny and I decided to let it go for the ‘rehearsal performance’ on the 17th of May but after a low reaction from the audience, I decided that it should be taken out for the run in London.

### **3) What impact does *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* have on the social relevance of *Don Giovanni* in our contemporary times in South Africa.**

Things that South African audiences relate to in *Don Giovanni* are the murder- and rape scenes. These are things that are very real to South Africans as it happens every day.

The *Alla Breve* doesn't contain the scene where the Commendatore (Donna Anna's father) is murdered. The use of weapons (guns) on stage are also staged very comical and

light heartedly. This gives the audience a chance to laugh at something they fear. The same can be said about the rape of Zerlina - the mood set for the audience is one of comedy inside the tension. This causes them to not take the rape too seriously and rather sit with smiles on their faces as they look on to the absolute chaos and confusion on stage.

**4) Do you feel that *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* can be influenced through the heated academic debate currently encircling the authenticity in music/opera?**

I know that there are a few theories around authenticity in opera, and I'm not really familiar with all of these theories. I feel however that this debate can of course have an influence on the *Don Giovanni Alla Breve*: If we argue the case in a certain way, and I decide to restage the whole *Alla Breve* production and change the script to suit our argument, then the debate has most certainly influenced the *Alla Breve* itself.

**5) Did you at any point feel uncomfortable with the current *Don Giovanni Alla Breve* being portrayed in a comical (almost sitcom-like) manner.**

No, I didn't feel uncomfortable. It made the audience laugh and I know of at least 3 people who dislikes opera but made an effort to see the *Alla Breve* every time the opportunity presents itself. This tells me that it speaks to people in a positive way and this makes me as the director happy. In saying that I'm not implying that it is right to turn *Don Giovanni* into a comedy, no. If it was a big, orchestrated production of *Don Giovanni*, I would have probably done things differently.